

December 28, 1987

Titan's expanding gap over Crockett was boosted by Thanksgiving weekend's series of events. But the best news of all had to be the success of the Survivors' Series. According to figures released by Titan, the Thanksgiving spectacular drew a "better than seven percent buy rate" on pay-per-view. Titan claims the Series was available in a record 7.5 million homes and on 400 cable systems. Using those figures, it means Survivors was purchased in approximately 525,000 homes (for comparison, Wrestlemania III, which had a 10 percent buy rate but wasn't available in as many homes, was purchased in 515,000 homes) and at \$14.95 per home, would have grossed \$7.8 million. Keep in mind a few things--1) I don't trust those numbers. They could be true, but probably are at least slightly exaggerated; 2) If SS grossed \$7.8 million, with splits with cable companies, Titan probably only received half that, but half of that, combined with a \$200,000+ live gate at the Richfield Coliseum means Titan may have grossed more than \$4 million on its own. This \$4 million more than makes up for any drops in the house shows over the weeks before and after Thanksgiving. In other words, Survivors was a huge financial success, much bigger than most folks in the industry had expected. The bottom line is that Titan wrestling may no longer be a "hot" item in the media as it was 18 months ago, however it is actually more popular today even if the house show business wouldn't indicate it. Remember another thing, Titan was under pressure to pull in big money on the Thanksgiving show. They had created some ill will in the PPV industry with their ultimatum which kept Crockett's Starcade off PPV.

January 4, 1988

The combination live, closed-circuit and pay-per-view gate from Starcade '87 totaled \$1.3 million. Roughly \$820,000 came from 40 or so closed-circuit theaters (which isn't bad), maybe \$180,000 came from the sellout at the Pavilion in Chicago and another \$300,000 came from 20,000 pay-per-view orders around the country which constituted a nearly seven percent national buy rate (or slightly less than McMahon's Survivors' Series did).

February 1, 1988

Another correction in regards to PPV which was my own mathematical mistake. I had reported Starcade had done a 6.6-percent buy-rate on PPV (Survivors did just over seven percent), but in reality it did only a 3.3 percent buy-rate (20,000 of 600,000 potential homes). I had heard the 20,000 figure but assumed it was of the 300,000 cable homes cleared, not taking into account another 300,000 satellite homes which also could have picked it up. It was reported to me that JCP had cleared a potential 6 million homes for the Bunkhouse finals, but that sounds awfully high to me. Most people I talked with had no way of getting the thing. If it was 6 million, and they did a 3 percent buy rate at \$15 a shot, we are talking about \$3 million in gross revenue. I don't think they did anything close to that, although the last minute hype was pretty good.

February 8, 1988

It takes a few weeks generally to get all the pay-per-view figures in, so figuring out how JCP's Bunkhouse Stampede show did can't be done as of yet. The preliminary reports I've got indicate the show may have been profitable at least in dollars and cents, although as reported, the vast majority of the reaction I received on the same was strongly negative. Preliminary figures indicate a buy-rate of four percent, which if that's the case, clearly shows that if given a fair shot, JCP could and would be profitable in the PPV arena.

February 29, 1988

The 1/24 Bunkhouse Stampede finals drew a 3.5 percent buy rate in nearly six million homes, which I guess means 200,000 homes signed up for the thing at \$15 a crack or \$3 million gross revenue, the assumption of which is that JCP gets half of that. I was told anything better than a three percent buy rate would be profitable, so to say the event was a financial bomb would be inaccurate. But it sure could have been a whole lot better.

April 4, 1988

The WrestleMania pay-per-view buy rate appears to be around six percent, or roughly half of the 12 percent that Titan had predicted and well off the 10.3 percent of last year's show. Still, even at six percent, the PPV grossed \$10.8 million, but in reality, of that the Titan bank account won't see more than \$3.5 million. Preliminary reports indicate a U.S. closed-circuit audience of around 175,000 (last year was 375,000) which accounts for an estimated \$2.3 million more.

April 11, 1988

Approximately 585,000 homes paid an average of \$19.95 to watch Wrestlemania IV on pay-per-view, or a six percent national buy rate (I've heard estimates from 6.0 to 6.5 percent this week depending on the source) so that's \$11.7 million. Add in \$3 million from closed-circuit (about 220,000 viewers in the U.S. and Canada.)... HOW DID THIS COMPARE WITH PREVIOUS WRESTLEMANIAS?: Pretty bad on all accounts. As a card, it was unquestionably the worst of the four by a wide margin. The first Wrestlemania drew between 430,000 and 450,000 fans on closed-circuit, although PPV was negligible in '85. The second drew 320,000 to 350,000, with more PPV which proved to be its saving grace. Last year's drew 441,000 via closed-circuit and more than 90,000 live as well, plus was the most successful PPV event in the history of the industry. The closed-circuit of 220,000 fans was only half of WM1 and WM3, and well off WM2 as well. The PPV money probably ranks in the same ballpark as last year's because of the increases made in the industry, but the buy rate was just over half of the buy rate of the first three, all of which did in the 10% range.

April 18, 1988

Titan Sports released information that Wrestlemania IV was projected to gross \$40 million when adding up revenue from the live gate, pay-per-view, closed-circuit and projected videotape sales. Let's tell the big lie again. The funniest part of their press release is that the figures they

gave were \$1.5 million for the live gate (which if you throw in Donald Trump's site fee is probably accurate), \$5 million for closed-circuit (roughly double the accurate figure), \$20 million on pay per view (they are claiming a 9.8 percent buy rate) and \$4 million based on selling 100,000 videos (which I'm told is out of the question). Add those figures up and they don't come close to \$40 million even using their own exaggerated numbers. Yet several publications have printed all these figures and the \$40 million figure without taking time to do addition.

May 9, 1988

The next NWA pay-per view show will be 7/10 from the Baltimore Arena with Ric Flair vs. Lex Luger and the triple tower of doom gimmick that World Class is using at the Texas Stadium show... Without WPIX, My suspicion is the PPV won't even be available in the New York City area. Actually the company which did the PPV in the Northeast for Bunkhouse won't be working with Crockett since the buy rate in that area was so poor so there may be no PPV in most of the Northeast.

May 30, 1988

A report in the latest issue of Broadcasting Magazine noted that Turner and Crockett have already cleared 8.5 million homes for their 7/10 Pay Per View show from the Baltimore Arena billed as the Great American Bash: The Price for Freedom. The untold portion of the story is that McMahon's attempts to retain a monopoly on the wrestling on PPV have at least temporarily failed, since only this most recent Wrestlemania, which had a clearance of around 10 million homes (or potential homes I should say) had a wider potential universe.. Even more interesting is that the PPV service Viewers Choice, which was the key service in handling Wrestlemania IV, will also be handling this show. So while McMahon and Titan did an excellent job of minimizing the negative effects of Wrestlemania almost to the point where they were non-existent, one of their most important goals, keeping Crockett out of the PPV arena, was thwarted at least temporarily. Crockett still has to produce on 7/10. The suggested price for the 7/10 show, which starts at 7 p.m. Eastern and 4 p.m. Pacific (and yes, they are going to hold a live match at 6:30 p.m. proving once again they never learn from their mistakes but that's something you dish owners can pick up) will be \$15.95... A three percent buy rate, which they will certainly achieve since they did around 3.5 percent for the Bunkhouse Stampede and 3.3 percent for Starcade (with head-to-head competition both times, this show may be unopposed although we'll have to wait to see McMahon's counter move and you know there will be one), would mean 255,000 homes at \$16 a pop or nearly \$4.1 million (which would be cut in several different directions, but the NWA will still take in more than \$1 million). And that is a conservative estimate. If for some reason this thing pops big, although I don't see any indication that will happen, that figure could be as high as \$6.5 million based on a five percent buy rate.

June 27, 1988

The hype is being turned on full-throttle for Crockett's 7/10 pay-per-view show in Baltimore, which is virtually guaranteed to be a financial success... With 9.4 million homes cleared for pay-

per-view, this is a multi-million dollar extravaganza. Crockett's first two PPV attempts, Starrcade (in very limited markets) and Bunkhouse Stampede (which was an unattractive line-up and not pushed well until the last weekend) both drew between a three and 3.5 percent buy rate, with direct head-to-head competition from Titan Sports. This show will be unopposed, and I think it'll easily get a four percent buy rate, which translates into 376,000 homes at \$16 a pop, or a \$6 million gross. Because of splits, JCP might only net around one-quarter of that, but it will still pay a lot of bills.

July 4, 1988

...DM: First off, nobody expects the Bash to do a five percent buy rate nationally. From the figures I've been given, the show will be very much a financial success with a three percent buy rate, which it should achieve without any problem. The NWA itself in a press conference last year announcing their intentions of getting into PPV stated they expect their shows to deliver between three and five percent, and their two shows thus far have fallen into the low end of that range. I haven't heard of any cable companies that expect them to do more than half the business Wrestlemania did on PPV, and my guess is that's about where they will fit in. And all things considered, doing half of Wrestlemania is a significant accomplishment for the NWA. This last Wrestlemania, even with cutting back on the price in the South, generally did around a 4-5 percent buy rate throughout most of the Southern states, and that is as big a PPV event as is currently offered not only in the wrestling business, but in either sports or entertainment on a national basis. Very few events, since Super Bowls and the NFL and the World Series haven't made the switch to PPV, can be reasonably expected to deliver anything close to a five percent buy rate on a national basis, yet we get several movies, comedy special, concerts and fights on PPV regularly. By the way, I presume that Titan already is responsible for in the neighborhood of 75 percent of all pro wrestling revenue in this continent.

July 11, 1988

Titan's pay-per-view records were all shattered earlier this week when the Mike Tyson vs. Michael Spinks boxing match drew a 15 percent national PPV buy rate (with prices ranging from \$35 to \$50) and grossed \$30 million in the PPV arena, which devastates Titan's old marks set at Wrestlemania III.

July 18, 1988

Only PPV news I've got as of press time is a few reports from several Southern systems indicating a five percent buy rate. Now since Crockett is strongest in the South (although none of these cities were strong Crockett markets), that is probably slightly higher than the national average. In fact, in all these systems, they did better than Wrestlemania IV (which drew a four percent buy rate in the South).

July 25, 1988

As of press time, I still don't have complete figures regarding the NWA's pay-per-view card in Baltimore on 7/10. The two figures I've heard are a 1.9 percent buy rate, which is terrible and a four percent buy rate, which is pretty much what was expected. The four percent came in a roundabout way from a TBS source, although officially I haven't been able to contact anyone at TBS this past week that had the figures. The 1.9 percent came from what I'd consider a very accurate source, which supposedly is a combination of lots of 4's and 5's in the markets that Crockett is strongest in, but less than one percent buy rates throughout the West Coast. I should also mention that both figures could be correct because there are two different ways to figure buy rate (percentage of homes from the total cable company and percentage of homes which have addressable converters--we've been using the latter figures). A 1.9 percent buy rate would mean about a \$3 million total gate, which would not be profitable while a four percent buy rate would indicate a \$6 million gross which would be very profitable.

August 1, 1988

The Baltimore Bash drew somewhere between 350,000 and 400,000 homes on pay-per-view nationwide (3 1/2 to 4 percent buy rate) which makes the gross somewhere between \$5.5 and \$6 million, which is roughly what was expected. All three companies which carried the show, within 48 hours, all agreed to carry Crockett's next PPV show, scheduled for December, which again means they'll have at least 10 million addressable homes cleared, and pretty much insures some success. Outside of three Vince McMahon shows (Wrestlemania III and IV and the Survivors Series) and a few boxing matches, this was the highest grossing event in the industry's history. Most events like boxing matches (non-media glamour events) or concerts that go on PPV nationally do a national one percent buy rate and two percent is considered exceptional--although in reality, the show did no more, and no less, than was expected. The buy rate varied greatly depending upon the area of the country, also as expected. It did exceptional in the Carolinas, and throughout the Southeast, where it actually beat out the numbers of Wrestlemania IV. It did threes in much of the rest of the country, but did poorly in Los Angeles (1.2) and not so well in New York (2.2), which are the key media markets.

August 8, 1988

From all reports I've gathered, it also appears that the 3 1/2 to four percent buy rate, reported by TBS and listed here last week, for the Baltimore Bash, is an example of McMath, so to speak. It appears, from the PPV companies which handled the show, that the actual buy rate was closer to two percent. From the reports I've received, while that isn't a money loser, whatever profits are garnered aren't nearly what the company was counting on to save its skin.

August 15, 1988

I've gotten official real figures on the NWA PPV event on 7/10 in Baltimore. Officially the thing did a 2.2 percent buy rate and was ordered in 190,000 homes according to TBS sources--which means it was available in around 8.7 million homes (it was cleared in 10 million but in several

markets there were problems in the transmission which knocked out areas). The PPV gross was probably in the \$3 million range and the take on the show was estimated at between \$300,000 and \$500,000 for the NWA, which is a disappointment.

September 12, 1988

I want to make mention that we don't have any stats in yet about how well the PPV show did this past Monday. Titan was projecting, before the show, a six percent buy rate. I wouldn't be surprised if it was in that range, which at a \$15 average purchase price means something like \$8 to \$9 million. If the show grossed \$9 million, then Titan's cut would be in the \$3 million range. That also tells you just how hard it will be for Titan to actually make that \$9 million (if that truly was the price they paid) back in the closed circuit and PPV of the Leonard fight.

September 19, 1988

The WWF Summerslam show, according to TV Guide, was purchased in one million homes on PPV. Electronic Media magazine reported it purchased in 900,000 homes and grossing \$13 to \$15 million (keep in mind this publication also reported WM4 as grossing \$40 million when the reality was probably less than half of that). TV Guide reported that it was the most-ordered event in the history of PPV. The WWF itself is claiming 880,000 homes, or an eight percent buy rate out of a potential universe of 11 million homes, which, if true, would be a phenomenal success. Judging from scattered reports from cable companies, including one company which owns small companies nationwide, the show fell well below its projected six percent buy rate. Request TV, one of its syndicators, reported being disappointed with the buy rate. Judging from Chicago and the San Francisco Bay Area's numbers (between five and six percent), both markets which in the past are 20 to 40 percent above the national average for Titan, it appears the show legitimately did around 4-4 1/2 percent buy rate, which is still profitable (in comparison, WM3 did 10 percent; WM4 did 6 1/2 to 7 percent). In most cases that I've seen, the WWF's publicly released statistics when it comes to things like gross annual income and other items which can't be checked out by the media (TV ratings for example are not exaggerated because they are easily checked out), are usually about double that of reality. I'd guess 450,000 homes at \$15 to \$20 a pop would be a legit figure, which means Summer Scam grossed between \$7 and \$8 million, of which Titan's cut of the pie was 30 percent--or between \$2.1 and \$2.5 million.

This shows just how precarious Titan's profitable potential is for the upcoming Ray Leonard boxing event on 11/7, as they put in a \$9 million bid to get the PPV and closed-circuit rights. I'm told Titan isn't planning on closed-circuiting the fight, except perhaps in a market or two in which PPV isn't available. That is the same basic plan for next March's Wrestlemania, in which virtually the entire revenue base will be PPV, with limited, if any closed-circuit (probably just closed-circuit in a few U.S. markets and throughout Canada where PPV isn't available). They are doing a different deal with the Leonard fight, in that they are syndicated the event themselves, not going through normal PPV syndicators like Request, Viewers Choice, etc. By doing that, they cut out the middle-man so to speak, and the fight won't need to gross \$30 million for Titan to break-even, as we've reported here, but instead break-even would probably

be \$20 million plus. Titan, in TV Guide, predicted that they would do more than one million homes for the Leonard fight (at \$30 a pop), which would be profitable, however boxing sources indicate a five percent buy rate (550,000 homes @ \$30), in which case Titan would lose \$1 million on the deal, would be as fortunate as Titan could get. Most boxing events draw around a two percent buy rate, or about the same as the NWA's Baltimore Bash. While Tyson vs. Spinks did do a 15 percent buy rate (highest national buy-rate in industry history, breaking the WM3 records), this fight has nowhere near the interest level of that one. Plus, boxing on PPV was hurt greatly by the Tyson fight only going 91 seconds. Leonard was the hottest draw in boxing, but has relinquished that crown to Tyson, and his foe has no drawing power. In addition, the fight comes just a few days after another fight which should actually get more media publicity when the time comes. Perhaps Titan doesn't mind dropping seven figures in order to get its feet wet in the boxing business.

September 26, 1988

Another correction is that last week I reported that Request TV got a lower than projected buy rate for Summer Slam, when in fact, Request didn't handle Summer Slam but a spokesperson for the company said the buy rate was lower than projected (second hand info, possibly some sour grapes, although from most figures, what was reported last week seems consistent--show did a nine percent buy rate in the New York area which as expected, is well above the national average but well below Titan's other PPV marks).

November 7, 1988

On the Titan side, most of the headaches and emphasis have not come from the wrestling side, but from its involvement in the Sugar Ray Leonard vs. Donny Lalonde fight on 11/7 in Las Vegas... A report carried locally predicted that because the PPV show was overpriced (Titan is recommending a \$29.95 price tag nationally) that Titan would get "less than a two percent buyrate," which would mean, in theory, losses of about \$6.5 million on the outing. I know many of you read similar stories that have predicted losses from \$3 to \$6 million, which would mean Titan would lose as much in one night as it took Jim Crockett years to lose. But my own feeling is these stories are exaggerated since rival boxing promoters don't want Titan involved in the fight game, more for self-serving reasons than their public reasons about Titan turning boxing promotion into a circus atmosphere and involving the wrestling personalities in the promotion. Titan itself is publicly predicting an eight percent buy rate, which if achieved, would make the fight very much profitable. Also, there are certain contractual clauses specific to this fight that are different than other PPV ventures Titan has been involved with which would minimize potential losses, should those losses occur. Still, realistically, this will be a money loser for Titan. That's probably why the promotion has reached panic-level over the past two weeks and will hurt the selling of their own Survivors' Series less than three weeks later because of the divided hype, even though the boxing and wrestling audience are mainly exclusive of one another. An interesting sidelight to this story which does relate to us is that Titan is insisting that all cable companies keep the information on the buy rates of both the boxing match and Survivors' Series strictly confidential. Since Titan is prone to heavily exaggerated public claims of its PPV

shows, and since every event they promote most publicly be proclaimed a financial success, they are doing this. This has nothing to do with pro wrestling, since the mainstream media doesn't deal with wrestling and when it does, will accept anything Titan feeds it as face value. However in the case of this boxing match, Titan is dealing with a whole new ball game. Boxing is covered extensively by the mainstream media. Some of the mainstream media has already proclaimed this fight a financial bloodbath, and thus will be looking for information after the fight to support that claim. More importantly, rival boxing promoters, particularly Bob Arum, who is running a boxing PPV event three days earlier featuring Thomas Hearn, will be looking to dig up negative publicity to make it appear he's won this small boxing promotional war. Titan is no longer dealing with Jim Crockett who was woefully inadequate at exposing opponents' weaknesses to the media. Titan is dealing with sharks of the first and most experienced order when they get into the fight game.

November 14, 1988

We'll have more on Leonard-Lalonde next week but Titan is facing a major PR crisis if they do what I expect they'll do... Anyway, I expect Titan will claim an eight percent buy rate for the fight, which so is far past ridiculous it isn't funny (Jim Troy told the media this afternoon that sales were going better than for Wrestlemania IV, although a week in I know of some companies which had less than a dozen orders for the fight) and they'll be very lucky to get two percent and the boxing media and rival boxing promoters will never let them get away with this as we've discussed last time.

November 21, 1988

And speaking of reality, Titan's first publicly released figures on the Sugar Ray Leonard vs. Donny Lalonde PPV show from Las Vegas this past Monday where they had a 7.2 percent national PPV buy rate and had 780,000 orders, which of course is totally phenomenal, greatly profitable and probably equally unrealistic. Unlike in the past, because Titan insisted upon confidentiality from the cable companies, there is no way to check up on these figures as was relatively easy for the past two wrestling shows they did (and which they released inflated figures as well--not that I blame them because releasing any figures is strictly for PR and you might as well make the most out of your PR). Later in the week they came up with the figure that the show did a \$19.5 million gross on PPV, breaking the all-time PPV record set by Wrestlemania IV of \$18 million (which they claimed was \$20 million after Wrestlemania IV when they claimed a new record at that time). I do know they had virtually no advanced orders going into the last day (as we've learned, PPV is mainly a last minute thing) and the last day price ranged mainly from \$34 to \$46 for the show, that comes out to 600,000 orders, so their own figures don't make sense unless you use McMath, which few have mastered. Anyway, it was figured the show needed to gross around \$20 million for Titan to be profitable, however they had guarantees from cable companies, which would have minimized potential losses (and minimized potential profits, whatever the case may be), so if the \$19.5 million figure is accurate, they probably made some money, but it was likely close to a break-even proposition. Titan was thrilled from the reports I received because it looked like a disaster going into the last day and

they did have a decent run, at least in some markets and overall the boxing card itself was very good from most all accounts and they did a first-class job of presentation and kept the wrestling folks away from the scene save a token interview with Jesse Ventura to promote the Survivors' Series. Titan claims it is now in the boxing business for good. Others claim all these figures are grossly exaggerated. One boxing source said the figures were exaggerated beyond belief, but the source was about as reliable as Titan itself would be. More neutral cable sources have indicated that there was no last minute run and the show was a failure, at least in many systems, and they can't believe the released figures either. Of four companies that I got reports off the record on, three claimed the show did worse than Crockett's Great American Bash while the other claimed it did very well. So after reading all this, you really don't know anymore than you started, do you? By the way, when Titan claimed a record, even using their own figures, for this PPV show, they are ignoring that the Tyson-Spinks fight ever took place because that was a much larger PPV event than any Wrestlemania or any other PPV event in history.

November 28, 1988

Here's some more dope on the Leonard-Lalonde fight on 11/7 from Las Vegas... While Titan initially claimed a 7.2 percent buy rate and 780,000 homes for the fight, then reduced its claim to a 5.8 percent buy rate and 630,000 homes and \$19.5 million, it's pretty much certain that these figures bear no relation with reality. For one thing, I'm told the actual clearances, claimed by Titan to be 10.9 million homes using their own figures, were really 9.4 million. Secondly, I've gotten a lot more reports over this past week than I expected I would considering the gag orders put on by Titan. One national cable system which has affiliates around the country claimed a 1.3 percent buy rate. Another claimed a 1.5 percent buy rate. Individual companies that I got figures from ranged between a one percent and a 3 1/2 percent and averaging them all up was a 2.2 percent. If we figure Titan did great in New York and Los Angeles as they claim (and even that is dubious since I got reports from two suburban NY companies which reported under two percent so their eight percent claim for the city through Warner may simply be a p.r. favor), maybe those national companies 1.3 and 1.5 are undershooting and it's between a 2 and a 3. Giving them the benefit of the doubt, and a national three would be 262,000 homes and figuring they were mainly late purchases (which they were) at \$35 equals \$.87 million. Titan paid \$9.5 million for the rights, but of that \$9.87 million they had to split it with cable companies and pay taxes and other fees but even so I can't see losses anything less than \$2.5 million, and this is giving everything a best case scenario. At two percent, the total gross is just \$6.6 million and that's probably losses of around \$3 million and that doesn't include advertising costs or anything else. Anyway, Titan's PR department is claiming this was a record setter (ignoring Spinks vs. Tyson ever existed, and the press has ignored it in the papers as well so give them credit for getting the story over). The promotions department is calling it a success and I do believe that whatever figure it is, Titan did more business with the fight than anyone else would have and even if they lost millions, they did as good a job of promotion as possible, although perhaps all that hype directed at the wrestling audience was aimed at the wrong group. The accounting department is declaring it a major disaster. Anyway, Titan is definitely still in the boxing business and it appears this fight was taken for them to learn an expensive lesson so when they do their

next fight (and it is promised to be the biggest fight of '89--Leonard vs. Hagler) they'll have a better idea and can translate it into more profits next time than losses this time.

December 5, 1988

-We can't ignore the real big show of the week, Titan's Survivors Series which took place Thanksgiving night from the Richfield Coliseum in suburban Cleveland... I actually believe I'll have legit figures within a week or so, but initial projections look like it may do in the four percent buy rate category, which is about what was figured before the show. Overall interest was nowhere near that of Summer Slam, because it didn't have a hot angle or what was perceived as a hot main event, but the overall buy rate was probably only a small percentage lower because it had the advantage of being held on the single best night of the year for pro wrestling.

-The actual gross for PPV from the Leonard-Lalonde fight on 11/7 was \$9.9 million (between a three and a three-and-a-half percent buy rate). However, losses were actually greater than I speculated last week. I had been under the assumption that Titan had gotten cable companies to pay large guarantees, which would have offset certain losses for anything under a five percent buy rate. While some companies did that, most companies guaranteed between one and 2 1/2 percent buy rates, and achieved those goals, so most cable companies actually broke even or showed a profit on the show. Leonard made his millions. It was Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas (who lost an estimated \$6.3 million on the live gate) and Titan Sports (whose losses appear to be in excess of \$4.5 million) that took the financial bath. Rival boxing promoter Bob Arum was quoted as saying, "There's no reason to lie about these figures (Titan claimed a 6.8 percent buy rate and a \$19.5 million gross). Sure, everybody lies before a promotion to build up the fight, but it's atrocious to do it after the fight. It's a gullible press that believes what Jim Troy says. He's treating the press like they were wrestling fans." Titan is still insisting they made money are are looking at doing another boxing PPV event in March. Arum would complain louder, except his fight three days earlier only did a one percent national buy rate with Thomas Hearns on top.

December 12, 1988

Titan Sports is claiming a 4.2 percent buy rate for its recent Survivors Series. While that hardly sounds like an exaggerated figure to me, those in the cable industry dispute the figure saying it still sounds on the high side. Titan wasn't successful in clearing as many homes as Summer Slam, even though they are claiming 11 million it is most likely between eight and nine million homes. Even if we figure 3.5 percent of nine million, that would be 315,000 homes at about \$20 a pop. Of that \$6.3 million gross, Titan's share would be around \$3 million, which is certainly profitable, but would be far less than the estimated losses incurred on its boxing venture a few weeks earlier. The PPV industry is really flattening out. Even though the NWA has a good date for its Starcade, there are several reasons why they should be very happy with a two percent buy rate. It looks like Titan will make less money running four PPV shows in 1989 than it made with two shows in 1987, unless they come up with new ideas that totally capture the imagination of the wrestling public.

December 19, 1988

Survivors Series appears to have been the WWF's least profitable PPV show since the early days of the industry and the Wrestling Classic. As we mentioned last week, Titan is claiming a 4.2 percent buy rate, however all the figures I've gotten have ranged between a one and three percent. I was told by Titan sources it did slightly better than Leonard-Lalonde (corroborating the 4.2) but every system I got figures from said Leonard-Lalonde did better, generally by about half a percent which would indicate between a 2 1/2 to three percent buy rate, which has to be disappointing. It's still profitable, as the show will have grossed 4 1/2 to 5 million, which means Titan grossed around two mil. Don't know the cost of putting one of these on, but the NWA's break-even point was around two percent, and it has to be more expensive for Titan since they advertise more and put on a more first-class overall production. Anyway, one rule of figuring Titan's PPV is to take one-half of their claim, which would only be a 2.1 percent buy rate. I'm thinking both Titan and NWA would be a lot better off in the long run promoting one or two major PPV events each per year.

December 26, 1988

Well, the AWA and Superclash III are history, probably in more ways than one... The first reports of a buy rate were an 0.8 percent nationally, which would be the lowest of any wrestling PPV show in history, although even the most optimistic of those involved had to realize none of the promotions have either the popularity or the exposure to be putting something of this major a proportion together... With 25 percent of the cable systems reporting, no real consensus on profitability of Superclash. Nobody would lose any money if they got a one percent buy rate, and really that was all anyone was realistically expecting and they are still hopeful they can average that out, although losing the Dallas market has to hurt. Memphis did the best (3 1/2 percent) and the potential would have been there to do better as they never hyped the card that big on the TV show. Minneapolis (one percent) was the second best market reporting, while the major Northeastern markets did very poorly.

January 2, 1989

Final notes: Depending upon who you wish to believe, the Superclash III show did somewhere between a 0.3 and 1.5 percent national buy rate (which I'm sure the real figure is somewhere between there). It appears the most reliable figure is 41,000 homes nationwide ordered the show (0.7 percent), however several thousand (particularly the Dallas market) have to be refunded because of cable problems so they'll actually get credit for slightly less than that. Supposedly, break-even was around one percent. Memphis (nearly four percent) was the strongest market and several markets, including Minneapolis and some Texas markets did a one percent while the major East Coast cities (NY, Philly, Boston, etc.) hovered in the 0.3 to 0.5 percent range.

January 16, 1989

-Speaking of Starrcade, the NWA's most recent PPV event...As for the buy-rate figures, there are a lot of different figures going around, with buy rates being claimed from one end of the spectrum to the other. It appears that there were between 100,000 and 150,000 orders with a universe somewhere between seven and 8.5 million homes. The actual buy rate was about 1.8 percent, which is almost exactly what I would have figured going in (I finally got one right). In comparison, the Baltimore Bash in July, which had a larger universe, had 190,000 orders and a 2.2 percent buy rate, while Titan's Survivors Series drew a 2.8 percent buy rate when everything was finally tallied up. The interest level on this show was probably about the same as Baltimore, with the slightly lower figure being the result of many cable companies being closed and unable to accept orders the three days prior to the broadcast, which is when the vast majority of sales for PPV events normally take place. However, because there was frequent mention on television to order by 12/23, the "advance" was unusually large so the final figure fell only slightly below that of Baltimore. The total gross on the January 16, 1989 show was most likely in the \$3 million range, as compared to around \$3.6 million for the Baltimore show, however this lower figure is mainly because of less potential home clearances this time out. Also, the recommended buy price for Starrcade was \$19.95 (\$24.95 late fee) as compared with \$14.95 and \$19.95 late fee for the Bash. It's hard to estimate profit margin between splits with cable companies and cable syndicators and costs of putting a show of this magnitude together, but anything above a one percent buy rate would have been financially successful.

January 23, 1989

The buy rate for the Royal Rumble show was probably between two and three percent. Judging from the "talk," I'd be very surprised if it wasn't the lowest buy rate for a Titan PPV show, but probably wasn't significantly below the Survivors Series, either.

February 6, 1989

-The 2.1 percent buy rate for Starrcade equals roughly 150,000 of around 7.3 million homes and a gross of about \$3.5 million. Overall, that has to be a success given the problems with getting orders the three days before the show in many markets. The Baltimore Bash grossed roughly \$3.6 million, but was available in far more homes, had a lower price and virtually the same % buy rate.

-Here are the PPV stats for 4/2. There are roughly 11 million homes in this country with PPV potential. Of those, TBS claims that the majority will carry Wrestle War '89 and not carry Wrestlemania. Approximately two million of those homes have the capabilities to carry both programs, although many of those homes are serviced by companies in which the heads of the companies also serve on Turner's Board, thus it is expected they will also boycott Wrestlemania. The two largest PPV clearing companies, Request and Viewers Choice, are locked in the Turner camp for this show. Right now it appears that McMahon won't be locked out of PPV completely, but will have to battle to clear between two and three million of those homes. While McMahon is expected to go for a heavier investment in closed-circuit outlets to

make up for his PPV loss, the closed-circuit business is a lot more risky these days, even for an event like Wrestlemania. Even the Tyson-Spinks fight "bombed" on closed-circuit and left local promoters losing fortunes.

-At the same time, Titan Sports attempted to change its deal with Viacom cable, and the other major companies, as far as the split of revenues for Wrestlemania. Titan even tried to get Viacom to agree to guarantee a seven percent buy rate, which isn't totally out of the realm of possibility for Hogan vs. Savage, but showed incredible chutzpah given the Royal Rumble did between a 1.4 and 1.9 buy rate, or less than the NWA's Starrcade show three weeks earlier which did a 2.1. It was actually Viacom cable which approached TBS about doing the 4/2 show, and Turner himself decided this was the time to make the big move, even if, from a purely economic standpoint of his own business, it is too much PPV in too short of a time period and they are several months premature in going head-to-head when the stakes are so high.

-The approximately 1 1/2 percent buy rate for Royal Rumble shows just how oversaturated PPV has become. Titan projected a three percent buy rate for the show, so it was a major disappointment, especially since it was less than the NWA's show.

February 13, 1989

-Although Titan is claiming that the Royal Rumble did a 2.8 buy rate, cable sources indicate it was between a 1.5 and a 1.6 in around 7 1/2 million homes or around 115,000 orders at around a \$23 average or roughly a \$2.6 million gross, which would be Titan's lowest gross since the 1985 Wrestling Classic when PPV was in its infancy. Based on what I've seen thus far, I'm thinking that the Flair-Steamboat 2/20 show won't be doing much better than that, if even as good.

March 6, 1989

-There are no statistics officially available on the Chitown Rumble PPV... While TBS isn't claiming any PPV figures as of yet, there has been claims by insiders that the event did "slightly better than Starrcade" on PPV, which, if true, would be better than I had figured and they would have to consider it a success. Of course, we all know about early reports of PPV buy rates by now. My guess is the show was available in seven to eight million homes and if they did a two percent buy rate (which sounds high to me based on the few systems I've gotten reports from, but I suppose it's possible) it would mean (at an \$18 per household average price based on \$14.95 pre-sale and \$19.95 last day pricing) a \$2.7 million total gross, of which the TBS share would be between 30 and 50 percent... From a cable industry source, the PPV did a 2.8 buy rate (which I'm very skeptical of, but we should have legit numbers within a week or two) and it had a tremendous late buy (my only reaction is the Wednesday night angle with Flair and Steamboat from Cleveland worked to perfection if that is the case). In many southern markets, it did better than all but the Wrestlemania shows although on the West Coast most cities and around a percent. Those in the cable industry believe the show did better than Starrcade simply because in so many markets, you couldn't order Starrcade the last few days because the cable

companies were closed for Christmas. An NWA source told me 2.2 to 2.3 percent as a figure, which sounds more believable, but all reports I'm getting indicate the show has to be considered a success considering they were following their own PPV show by just seven weeks and did far better numbers than Titan did on 1/15 for the Royal Rumble.

-Cable companies seem to be expecting between a 6.5 and 7.0 percent buy rate for WrestleMania (everyone figures that in these days of frequent PPV events and in particular, regular PPV wrestling events, the days of an eight to 10 percent buy rate are ancient history, and considering the ratings of the NBC special, hoping for anything over an eight is unrealistic).

March 13, 1989

While nobody at TBS has given me any "official" figures on the 2/20 Chitown PPV event, the company has released figures to others that between 200,000 and 220,000 homes of a potential universe of 7.5 million bought the show (or a 2.7 to 2.9 percent buy rate). If those figures are true, the show grossed in excess of \$3.6 million which would be a tremendous success. I don't believe those figures, however. Titan is claiming the show did a one percent buy rate, which I also don't believe, since the show did ones in markets with poor or no syndication in areas the NWA traditionally isn't strong in. Judging from the limited responses I've gotten from cable companies indicates the thing did around a 1.5 (or roughly the same as Royal Rumble and about what I predicted), although everyone seems to swear it beat out Starrcade by just a bit (which means a 2.2 or so). So you can believe what you wish. TBS is also claiming the show grossed \$80,000 on the 900 number (people calling in to listen to the audio of the PPV show in areas in which PPV isn't available) and if that's the case, they would have a goldmine if they promoted the fact they were doing a phone-line simulcast for future big shows and are claiming they did the biggest first week of video sales for any wrestling tape that they've ever released.

April 17, 1989

-Titan has claimed an 8.3 percent pay-per-view buy rate and \$25 million in revenue [for WrestleMania V], which would break the all-time PPV record set by the Michael Spinks vs. Mike Tyson boxing match, but we all knew they'd come out with an inflated figure like that. Based on the reports we've got here, and they are pretty substantial at this point, the show appears to have done a 5.5 percent buy rate, which has to be a major disappointment for Titan. Publicly, Jim Troy was telling everyone it would do at least a 10 percent buy rate, although privately the folks at Titan were talking about a six to seven percent buy rate. In comparison, last year's Wrestlemania did a 6.5 buy rate while Summer Slam did a 4.5, Survivors did a 2.8 and Royal Rumble did a 1.6. There were actually fewer overall orders for this year's Wrestlemania than last year's, and virtually the same amount as the year before (when the PPV universe was only half of what it is today)

-Want to know the value of advertising? As mentioned last week, the New York Daily News had a 12-page advertising insert on Wrestlemania, which was extremely well done, hyping all the matches. Well, figures from Long Island Cablevision indicate this was money well spent.

Wrestlemania had a phenomenal 16.2 percent buy rate, nearly triple the national average, on Long Island (Nassau/Suffolk). It should be pointed out that the show would have done big business in those communities anyway, well in excess of a 10 percent buy rate simply because they are affluent communities which can afford PPV so readily, and also because Titan's strongest influence is in the New York area. Next year Titan is going to have advertising inserts placed in newspapers throughout the country the week before Wrestlemania VI. The Chicago Sun-Times also had a cover story in its weekend section with Jesse Ventura's picks for Wrestlemania and Chicago did a 7.8 percent buy rate, once again well above the national average. From all the figures we've received at this point (Monday afternoon as compared with Saturday when the first pages of this issue were put together) it appears the national buy rate was closer to 5.9 percent, which would make almost \$1 million more in the total gross, but once again, all these figures, except for the live gate, are estimates. Titan is claiming to have done \$2.5 million on closed-circuit, which may not be a lie, or out of character. For example, at Wrestlemanias I, II, and III, they claimed one million closed-circuit attendance when the actual figures were 400,000; 320,000 and 441,000 respectively. Last year they claimed \$5 million closed-circuit when the real figure was approximately half of that. It's hard to estimate closed-circuit figures thus far. The province of Ontario did 92 percent of capacity which was the biggest. Los Angeles Sports Arena drew 6,000 fans, which I believe was the largest closed-circuit crowd in the United States. Most of the houses ranged from \$10,000 to \$30,000, although the Cow Palace drew 5,059 Paid. Concessions alone at Trump Plaza brought in roughly \$170,000, and concessions should have brought in at least \$500,000 total everywhere else. Claims of a \$20 million plus gross, when concessions are added in, appear to be legit, however claims of \$30 to \$40 million, as in the past two years, are every bit as ludicrous as they were in the past.

May 15, 1989

- TBS had managed to clear 11.6 million potential homes for the Wrestle War show, which I believe is a record number of homes cleared for a pro wrestling PPV show (Wrestlemania V cleared 10.7 million homes) although early reports indicate around a one percent buy rate, which at best would be marginally profitable. Still, that was to be expected for reasons we've repeated many times over the past few weeks.

May 22, 1989

-The Wrestle War show itself had a 1.3 national buy rate, which means roughly 150,000 orders out of a PPV universe of 11.6 million homes. From PPV, the show grossed approximately \$2.7 million and the profit margin on this is estimated at \$750,000 to \$1 million. Truthfully, the folks at TBS and at the NWA were disappointed by these figures, hoping for a two percent buy rate, but the numbers are roughly what both myself and Steve Beverly had figured going into the show.

-5. THE WRESTLING CLASSIC (WWF) 11/7/85: This event has been forgotten in wrestling history as its one of the few flops the WWF has presented. Back in 1985, Titan was planning on running bi-monthly PPVs, but its first attempt drew so few buyers (just 47,000 nationwide, which

was a 2.5 percent buy rate but the PPV universe was so small three-and-a-half years ago that it wasn't profitable) that the rest were canceled.

July 24, 1989

-Speaking of Zeus, tickets went on sale Tuesday for Summer Slam at the Meadowlands on August 28th... Titan is so enthused about this show that there is optimistic talk that the PPV buy rate for this card could be on par with the six percent buy rate of Wrestlemania, and for the first time ever besides Wrestlemania, Titan will be closed-circuiting this show as well, although only in Canada (which has no PPV capabilities).

July 31, 1989

-It's too early to gauge the PPV numbers [for the '89 Great American Bash], but the talk the night of the show was the card was projected to do a 1.2 to 1.3 percent buy rate out of a 12 million home universe, although PPV figures aren't exactly always reliable statistics... If the show does a legit 1.2 buy rate, it would mean it would be a \$2.1 million PPV show, which would be profitable, but the company was "hoping" for a 1.5 to 2.0 buy rate this time around.

August 7, 1989

Depending upon which source you choose to believe, the buy rate for the Great American Bash was somewhere between 0.9 and 1.4 percent (probably not far off Nashville, but well below both Starrcade '88 and Chitown Rumble and slightly below the WWF's lowest PPV, the January Royal Rumble) which means the vast majority of viewers were the regular weekly TV viewers.

August 28, 1989

-Turner Home Entertainment's Steve Chamberlain announced that the July 23rd Baltimore Bash did its highest ratings of any PPV show it has done so far, so I guess they are learning from their competition about how to announce PPV figures. Chamberlain reported the show did a two percent buy rate (ironically, TBS had reported the Flair vs. Steamboat PPV from Chicago did a 2.8). The reports we've got from cable systems indicated a buy rate of 1.4, and one NWA official gave me 1.5 as the legitimate figure and that the PPV grossed \$2.3 million legitimately.

-The WWF's big show of the summer occurs on Monday night at the Meadowlands, "Summer Slam '88," featuring the main event tag team match with Hulk Hogan & Brutus Beefcake vs. Zeus (Tom Lister) & Randy Savage. In last week's issue of Multi-Channel news, Titan exec Jim Troy predicted this would be the best-selling PPV event in history (somehow, that sounds familiar), predicting one million buys, which would be an eight percent buy rate. Troy was mentioning how the "advance buys" for PPV were ahead of anything they've ever done. While I don't know if that is true, I've heard that the advance is quite promising and that since PPV is very much a late buy business, Titan is optimistically hoping for a four to five percent buy rate legitimately which means the show could gross in excess of \$10 million on PPV... The show will

have a suggested retail price of \$11.95. Titan originally wanted a \$14.95 retail price for the PPV show, but since movies traditionally go for \$5, several major distributors balked and the price was dropped three dollars... The Multi-Channel news article also stated that Titan is bidding for the PPV rights to the Rolling Stones concert on Dec. 16 or Dec. 17 at Trump Plaza (Starrcade will be Dec. 15) although the last word I had is that Showtime seemed to have political advantage in getting the rights to the Stones.

September 11, 1989

From a financial standpoint, it appears the SummerSlam show was a major success, which doesn't come as much of a surprise. PPV figures are all works and it is almost impossible to get accurate numbers, but the best we've been able to ascertain, it appears this show did right around a five percent buy rate, maybe just slightly under. At this point in time, I'd consider that as tremendous, given all the PPV shows that are around. It did better than Summer Slam last year, and that was during a time when there were very few PPVs, unlike this year when they seem to run just about monthly. If the show did a five buy rate, it probably means something along the order of 550,000 buys and maybe as many as 600,000, which at an \$18.50 average price, adds up to in excess of \$1 million, so this would easily be the biggest grossing overall show besides the past three Wrestlemanias. If you throw in closed-circuit from Canada and live gate from the Meadowlands, the show could conceivably have approached a \$12 million total gate, although a realistic guess is in the \$11 million range.

October 9, 1989

Speaking of PPV, some changes are in the offing in the cable industry as a company called TCI is trying to buy out a lot of systems. The end result of this is there is talk that perhaps as soon as next spring, the number of addressable homes for PPV may top 20 million, or about a 60 percent increase over the current total. In other words, if all things were to stay the same, big PPV events would gross about 60 percent more money next year than they do this year with roughly the same costs of putting the events together. This could happen in time for next year's Wrestlemania which would virtually guarantee it setting every wrestling PPV record for total revenue and total orders, even with a lower buy rate than previous Titan PPV events.

October 30, 1989

-The WWF announced on Sunday night that the 1990 Royal Rumble PPV card would take place on January 21st in Orlando, FL, which would be Titan's first-ever PPV show from the Southeast. Titan insiders are expecting that show will be its weakest in terms of buy rate. Last year's Rumble was Titan's weakest PPV buy rate ever, gathering about a 1.5 percent of potential viewers or a similar rate to the NWA's most recent PPV show from Baltimore.

-By next year, there is a good chance if TCI has its way, that the number of homes that have PPV availability will increase to 20 million (it's around 12.5 million right now + If buy rates stay the same, or even if they drop slightly, that still means a lot more revenue with basically the

same expenses. If, as predicted, by 1995, the number of PPV homes is 40 million, then all of a sudden a one percent buy rate and \$20 price tag per show will generate \$8 million, and if that can be done three or four times per year, even with the splits with cable companies, you are talking about enough money to make wrestling profitable. If, for some reason, the NWA achieves major league status and could do a two percent buy rate for three PPV events per year, you are talking about a \$48 million gross or probably profits on PPV in excess of \$20 million.

November 6, 1989

Apparently Jim Troy, the Titan VP in charge of international affairs and lying on PPV buy rates was the instigator of their fight in Brussels. Troy officially has resigned from the company in order to work more in boxing, although he's still working out of the same office and is still a consultant to Titan.

November 13, 1989

-The biggest news pertaining to the Halloween Havoc show is from all reports this week, the show did a 1.7 percent buy rate on PPV, which is a lot higher than I, or even the company for that matter, expected. Keep in mind right away that both companies (NWA and WWF) have been known to not sometimes, but almost always, exaggerate PPV figures. For example, the last NWA PPV show (Baltimore Bash) was reported by the Turner people as doing a 2.1 percent buy rate, but a random check of companies by us indicated about a 1.4 percent buy rate, a similar check by another non-wrestling source (Multi Channel News) also indicated a 1.4, and finally two different NWA sources told me a 1.5 figure, which is at least believable. However, this 1.7 figure was reported to me by two different sources that have been honest in the past and the basic word within the company is the show did better than Baltimore. Now this 1.7 percent figure was not reported to me as a definite total, but as the preliminary estimate the company had as of Wednesday. Legitimate figures aren't available until two weeks or so after the show. If the preliminary figures are taken from companies mainly from the Southeastern area, this legitimate estimate could be well above a national average anyway since the NWA's appeal is regionally based. But if the 1.7 figure holds up to about 175,000 to 195,000 orders, you are talking about gross PPV revenue of somewhere between \$2.6 million and \$3.2 million (figuring the list price was \$14.95 for the show and the late price was \$19.95 and PPV is traditionally a late buy). Even if this 1.7 is either an exaggerated figure, or a figure based on early returns from stronger regions, even if this thing winds up at around a 1.3 percent buy rate, which all indications are that it will, then it has to be labeled a success. This show being a success with somewhat of a weaker line-up than previous NWA PPV outings can be attributed to a few factors. First off, several within the NWA have suggested the surprising success is due to the surprising and sudden ratings increase the two weeks prior to the show. With more people watching the show in the last two weeks than at any time since the early part of the year, that is more potential buyers being reached at a time when the hype for the show was at its strongest. Another factor is that while many of us thought Saturday night wouldn't be a strong night for PPV for psychological reasons (you know, people want to go out on Saturday while on weeknights one

would think they are more apt to stay home), it appears the night of the week doesn't matter. Some have even suggested that on the West Coast, going on Saturday is a plus since the 5 p.m. West Coast starts make it hard for people to be there on time and psychologically, people don't like to order the replay show as much. The competition from the World Series turned out to mean less than we had thought here, simply because there was less interest in this World Series, due to the Earthquake and subsequent delay, than any Series in recent memory and the TV ratings for that game were below the other network's normal programming. One also has to think that the vast majority of those who purchased the four previous PPV shows had to be happy with the shows, which could be a factor with a marginal buyer who wasn't totally thrilled with the line-up but figured if it's a PPV show, it's going to be hot.

November 27, 1989

Before I forget, officially the NWA PPV from Philadelphia drew a 1.77 percent buy rate, which is about 200,000 orders and just over \$3 million in gross revenue. I'm told the gross revenue and total buys were slightly better than any previous NWA PPV event, which surprised just about everyone.

December 4, 1989

It's too early to tell about PPV buy rates for Survivors, but the earliest most vague estimates were around three percent, which would mean roughly 350,000 orders and a \$7 million gross. Of that, Titan's share would be \$3 million, which once again shows where the wrestling business is headed, when in one night the promotion grosses a few weeks worth of normal house shows... It appears Survivors Series did right at a three percent buy rate.

December 11, 1989

-Based on figures I've gotten, the Survivor Series buy rate looks to be around 3.3 percent, which is up from last year's 2.8 for the same show. Other sources are putting the figure at somewhere between 2.8 and 3.0. As for the marketing of the show itself, I kind of expected it to do slightly better than last year because it was promoted better on television, plus all those airings of the "Countdown" show on USA which was a two-hour commercial which aired four times. That made up for the match-ups themselves being a lot less interesting than in previous years. A three percent buy rate with a universe of nearly 12 million homes would indicate about 350,000 orders and upwards of \$7 million in gross revenue. The split on PPV is 50 percent for the cable operators, 45 percent for Titan and five percent for Viewers Choice/Request and whomever the syndicator is (that five percent, and Titan's attempt to eliminate the middle-men from the picture is what caused all the furor prior to Wrestlemania last year and nearly got Titan's big show knocked off PPV). However, what has happened are a few things in the past that have a small factor in the revenue. While traditionally PPV is late buys (and there is generally a \$5 surcharge on the late buys), somehow the extra \$5 on the late buys never gets into the pot. Also, there are people who order the show and don't pay when the cable bill comes the next month, although I don't know how much of a factor this really is (but the Crockett NWA had a beef with one of the

syndicators in 1988 over this subject and cost them one major cable syndicate for Starrcade '88). Realistically, Titan's revenue from PPV for Survivors should be around \$3.15 million and costs at around \$1.35 million to put on the show so the profit margin should be about \$1.8 million. In comparison, the NWA's profit margin for the Halloween Havoc card was said to be \$1.25 million although Titan sources dispute that figure saying it couldn't have been that high.

-Multichannel News reported in the 11/13 issue when reporting on Halloween Havoc said that systems contacted reported buy rates generally between 1.5 and 2.0 percent for the show, which indicates the figure bandied about within NWA circles that the show did a 1.77 percent buy rate appears legitimate. Steve Chamberlain of Turner Home Entertainment publicly claimed a two percent buy rate which, if nothing else, appears to be the smallest exaggeration of the legitimate figures of any PPV event thus far for either group. Chamberlain, in the article, said that the increase in buy rate when compared with the previous NWA PPV events (ironically Chamberlain claimed a 2.1 for the Baltimore show, now claims a two percent as an increase and they were claiming a ridiculous 2.8 for the Flair-Steamboat Chicago show) was because they wrapped more entertainment around the actual wrestling itself and because of the promotional spots using Elvira. Chamberlain said in the future "we'll be much more aggressive towards the entertainment marketing of the events" and said that they will try to introduce a new gimmick match on each future PPV event after Starrcade, which he said would be more wrestling-oriented because of its past history and tradition.

-In other wrestling-related PPV events, the Thunder and Mud show from several weeks back with Jessica Hahn, where the lure was the mud wrestling and the cheapest PPV event ever offered (\$9.95 price tag) did less than an 0.1 percent buy rate which also makes it the least purchased PPV event ever.

December 18, 1989

-Speaking of PPV, it appears our estimates last week on the Survivor Series buy rate were a tad low. While Titan's claim of a 5.8 percent buy rate for the Thanksgiving show can be dismissed as fiction, KBLCOM Inc. reported a systemwide buy rate of four percent. Since they have a more heavy base in the Northeast (which traditionally does well above the national average for Titan PPV events), that figure is no doubt above what the actual buy rate was, but based on figures here, the number appears to be between a 3.3 and 3.4 percent buy rate, which is significantly up from last year's 2.8 percent buy rate for the same show. That would be an estimated 385,000 orders at a suggested price of \$18.50 or roughly a PPV gross of \$7.12 million on the event (of which Titan's share would be about \$3.2 million).

-The reason Titan decided to try again to ace Viewer's Choice and Request out of the picture at this time was because the company felt that if it had to sacrifice one PPV event to get the point across that they were doing this, it might as well be the one which would damage them the least financially since Rumble was the least-bought of the four WWF PPV events thus far in 1989. Originally Titan sources felt that Viewer's Choice and Request, which are the middle-men between the promoters and the cable companies get 10 percent of the gross revenue on these

events, would be able to limit Royal Rumble to a potential universe of just two million homes (in comparison, the recent NWA and WWF PPV events have had universes of nearly 22 million homes). However, of late, Titan has expected this universe for Rumble to be closer to five million. It is felt that if they can get away with putting this show on without any backlash (and nobody expects the NWA to get involved this time in an attempt to sabotage a smaller event like Royal Rumble), that faced with the prospect of losing Wrestlemania, one of the most profitable PPV events of the year with no competing event on that day, that the majority of the cable universe will sign up with Titan and break the stranglehold of Viewer's Choice on the PPV market. The real story if there is one would be if or what. Viewer's Choice does in retaliation, and if this gamble fails at the Royal Rumble, where will that leave Wrestlemania. But with this smaller universe it would appear that Royal Rumble would need approximately a 2.7 percent buy rate to break even, or more than double (because of the additional universe) what a normal WWF PPV's break-even point would be. Last year's Royal Rumble delivered approximately a 1.5 percent buy rate. If Titan clears less than five million homes for the Rumble, the odds are long that the show can be profitable, in which case they will be putting on the event strictly as a loss leader to attempt to gain additional profits for Wrestlemania if they are successful in breaking the stranglehold.

December 25, 1989

-Speaking of PPV, the WWF taped it's No Holds Barred main event match on 12/12 in Nashville which airs on 12/27 as part of a PPV with the movie. Titan officials are predicting between a two and three percent buy rate for this package, which sounds overly optimistic to me.

January 8, 1990

The 12/27 PPV, which was a showing of the movie "No Holds Barred" plus a taped cage match with Hulk Hogan & Brutus Beefcake vs. Zeus & Randy Savage, did about a 1.6 percent buy rate which at \$11.95 list price, translates into about a \$2.3 million gross. In most companies we got figures for, it did roughly half of what the Survivors Series did on Thanksgiving night.

Considering that this event wasn't hyped nearly as much as most Titan PPV's and doing a one match card with a movie available for rental in any store for a buck or two, everyone had to at least be satisfied with the results. There were people hoping for two to three percent buy rates for this one, but it just as easily could have bombed.

January 22, 1990

It wasn't exactly an 11th hour settlement, but it can be labeled a 10th hour one. This past Thursday, Titan Sports signed a seven-year contract with Viewers Choice to enable VC to syndicate all its PPV events through the end of 1996. The move was made ten days before the Royal Rumble, and should enable the Rumble to be cleared for the vast majority of the 13 1/2 million home PPV universe. This ends a highly publicized battle between the two firms which had resulted in limited pick-up of the Rumble. Both sides, of course, are claiming a victory here. I don't know why Titan would be, since the end result of all this fighting is that they are in the

same situation, and locked into it for seven years, that they started this fight to avoid. Although in last week's "Broadcasting" magazine, WWF's Basil DeVito claimed Titan had cleared 6.2 million homes for the Rumble, and claimed by the time the show was on that eight million would be available, cable sources say those numbers were totally out of line. They claim that of the 131/2 million homes with PPV capability, that companies which represent 8.8 million homes had agreed not to carry the Rumble. The vast majority of the rest were going to, but the estimate was that was only between a 4.0 and 4.5 million potential universe, or one-third or less than the total PPV universe. Titan, several months back, began making plans for a long fight to remove the "stranglehold" as they called it (and mainly the ten percent of the total gross that VC and its PPV syndication rival, Request, get for carrying these type of events) of Request and VC from the industry. The Rumble would be the show which would break the lock, and they would sit out Wrestlemania (one of the big PPV events of the year) to prove the point. We had figured here that they would use the Rumble to prove the point but that when push came to shove, if they didn't win the fight, they'd back down in time for Wrestlemania, because far too much money was at stake. In reality, Titan made the correct business decision here, and the only one. If the Rumble does a two percent buy rate on Sunday, and if you figure the PPV universe for the show at 12 million, you are talking about 240,000 orders at the \$18.50 suggested price or about a \$4.4 million gross. Titan's share of that would be \$2 million. Titan's estimated cost for doing Survivors was \$1.35 million (although no doubt they will spend less for Rumble since it is expected to generate less--last year's Rumble was a "cheaper" looking show than the other three PPV's which all grossed far more). So the show should do a decent profit. But, without VC and with let's say a 4.5 million home universe, the total gross would be about \$1.67 million and Titan's share would be \$830,000, so the show would have lost several hundred thousand dollars. There is some concern within the cable industry that this deal was signed too late and it will negatively affect Sunday's buy rate.

February 1, 1990

Royal Rumble show appears to have done about a two percent buy rate. However, in the systems that were cleared earlier (without Viewers Choice), the show apparently did better than a 2.5 percent buy rate. In the VC systems, which didn't clear the show until about ten days beforehand because of the fight between Titan and the syndicators, the show did about a 1.5 percent buy rate. Since there were about 7.5 million homes in the latter category and 4.5 million in the former, the buy rate may fall just a tad under a 2, but it's very close one way or another. This blows my theory right out of the water that the late agreement would be enough for a uniform buy rate since PPV is generally the last minute buy, and that), financially Titan wasn't going to be hurt by its fight. As it turns out, all three sides lost some money because of the fight. While the two percent buy rate translates into about a \$4.4 million total gross (of which Titan's share should be about \$2 million which means a profit margin of at least \$650,000 on the show), given the differences between the VC homes and the non-VC homes performance, the fight, even though resolved, still cost the event at least 75,000 purchases. So when all is said and done, the fight cost Titan an estimated \$550,000 to \$600,00 in pure profit, it cost cable companies that backed VC slightly more than that and cost VC itself about \$139,000 (if there

had been no fight, because if they had just not fought, it would have cost VC untold millions over the long haul).

March 5, 1990

As I write this, no figures on the Wrestle War PPV buy rate are available, however some non-NWA sources in a few markets have indicated that this probably will do better than any previous NWA PPV

March 12, 1990

Which brings us to now. TBS sources are claiming the 2/25 Wrestle War PPV did a two percent buy rate, which means 240,000 orders and total gross revenue of \$3.8 million, the latter figure would be a record for the company. While independent sources earlier had told me the show was going to finish at above a 1.5 buy rate, I'd still take the announced figure with a grain of salt. Turner Home Entertainment has announced a two percent figure for most of the recent PPV shows, only to have us later find out the real figures were somewhat lower.

March 26, 1990

The last two Wrestlemanias each did approximately a six percent buy rate, so a seven percent figure without the competition (and also with the hottest main event since No. 3 and five years of tradition to sell the event) seems realistic. It could go even higher.

April 9, 1990

The Wrestlemania show did an estimated four percent buy rate on PPV (in comparison, Summer Slam last August with Zeus did a five percent buy rate while last year's Wrestlemania did about a six) which should work out to \$15.8 million and maybe \$700,000 on closed-circuit (which is a very liberal estimate). All tolled, the show grossed probably a bit below \$20 million and it appears the final gross figure will be just a tad lower than last year, even with the expansion of number of homes on PPV. Really, closed-circuit may be even lower than that estimate. I was given a \$20,000 per location as break-even for the closed-circuit and about a week before the show was told Titan was "hoping" for \$15,000 per site and from figures I've received, the average appears to be around \$11,000 per location for 30 U.S. locations. There wound up being about 20 Canadian locations, which probably did better (since there is no PPV in Canada) but I was told Canada closed-circuit was way down as well from past years. Lots of folks in Titan had decided beforehand that closed-circuit was a dinosaur industry (about to go extinct) and this show seems to have proven that theory. It's not expected that Titan will do any closed-circuit of future shows except Wrestlemania and I expect that would be limited to just a handful of sites, if it's even attempted next year. Even though the closed-circuit itself was a money loser, and Titan's share of the \$15.8 million works out to about \$6 million, and the costs of doing the show in Canada were significantly higher and hidden costs were a nightmare, this was profitable, but obviously not on the level as last year's probably was. Monday morning

speculation on the low buy rate is that the \$29.95 price tag scared enough people away that they actually cost themselves money with the price raise... Like I said, the falloff in closed circuit receipts from \$3 million last year to maybe \$700,000 this year (and it could in reality be \$500,000 to \$600,000) is more because that industry is just about obsolete.

April 16, 1990

While Titan's claims in the trade papers of an expected 10 percent buy rate for WrestleMania can be dismissed (in fact, some in the company were upset they even made those claims knowing there was no way they could come close and it would set the cable companies up for a disappointment), five weeks out, everyone expected at least a seven percent. After all, prior to Feb. 23, Hogan vs. Warrior appeared to be the strongest main event since Hogan vs. Andre three years earlier. Also, the past two years, Wrestlemania has had direct competition from a free TBS Clash special. While it probably didn't have a major effect on the buy rate, it just as obviously must have had a minor effect. That competition was gone this year. Yet when the dust settles, the buy rate fell at four percent. If you figure that each percent of homes at the prices charged for this show means \$4 million, you see exactly what the difference of four percent and seven percent really is. It appears the total gross for the show will be \$19.5 million, which is down from approximately \$20.9 million last year even though more homes are equipped for PPV this year and there was no competition this year, even though the live gate was more than double last year's. The death on closed-circuit has little to do with the product. Closed-circuit is a dead industry due to the rise of PPV. But PPV? All sorts of theories have been espoused and were printed last week. Two points seem significant from here. First, in the places where the economy isn't as good, the buy rate was significantly down. In other words, the price rise to \$29.95 (and \$34.95 late fee) was somewhat of a factor.

April 30, 1990

It appears from several national estimates that Wrestlemania on PPV did a 3.8 percent buy rate and about 495,000 buys. If I had heard these figures for Wrestlemania in January (combined with the closed-circuit figures) I'd have called it a tremendous flop. I guess, because it was an exciting show live, one tends to overlook that the show didn't accomplish from a business perspective anything near what it was expected to. Titan's official claim is a six percent buy rate and 852,000 homes, so even they are acknowledging that it did well below last year and was the lowest buy rate by far of any previous Wrestlemania. Titan publicly has been claiming a success, because even though there were less buys, because the price was higher (and the universe larger), they are claiming the show grossed more revenue than last year. While PPV revenue is difficult to accurately gauge because all released numbers can and often are worked figures, and the price varies (for example, while the list price for WM was \$29.95, several systems charged as much as \$39.95 for late buys and other systems cut the price down to \$24.95 feeling that Titan's suggested price was too high), it appears that isn't the case. It is estimated that PPV of WM last year grossed \$16.3 million and the figure this year was approximately \$15 million. Overall, it appears the show this year did about \$19 million in total gross (of that, Titan itself probably grossed \$8 million) as compared with about \$21 million last

year. While Multi Channel News' story basically laid the blame for the high price for the surprisingly weak performance this year, and most seem to agree that was a major part of the problem, Titan doesn't seem to believe it publicly. For example, as of right now, the price for Summer Slam on PPV will be suggested to be close to the same figure as Wrestlemania. While others claim it was the face vs. face confrontation not working as well as a face vs. heel has done in the past, or misusing the valuable NBC time, still others claim as many people saw the show but more people grouped it because of the high price. Probably true somewhat, yet at the same time, other factors need to be pointed out. Ratings for the NWA show that went head-to-head (an unpublicized edition of NWA Main Event as compared with major Clashes the previous two years) were solid. If the world were watching Wrestlemania, then the NWA couldn't have done only slightly less than their average rating for a weak show against the big event. If price itself was the complete answer, then why was closed-circuit down so much. Closed-circuit tickets were priced a lot lower than \$30 yet the arenas were bare, even in comparison with last year. Our estimates are that closed circuit, which did \$3 million last year, did \$600,000 or so this time out. Even admitting to CC as a dying industry, that is a staggering drop-off. With no "free" competition show as in previous years, all things being equal, this show would have broken records set last year for PPV. Instead, by standards set by previous WMs, the show laid an egg on PPV. But price was certainly somewhat of a factor because in many cities with poorer economies, the show did less than a two percent buy rate. But even in New York and Los Angeles, the buy rate was down from the previous year. The Multi Channel News article of 4/16 (which attributes most of the fall-off to the price itself and doesn't analyze the difference between face vs. heel on top with face vs. face or any aspect of the NBC promotion or syndicated interviews) quoted Titan's Steve Planamenta as saying buys were down 15 percent from last year but the price was up 20 percent and claimed \$25.5 million in PPV revenue from the show. But to get that figure of 15 percent down, they had to re-adjust the "work" buy rate from last year which last year was claimed to be 8.3 (really about 6.0) down to 7.5.

June 4, 1990

The NWA Capitol Combat PPV buy rate appears to be around a 1.3 percent, which if true, would be about 165,000 orders or a \$2.5 million gross. It's slightly below, but just slightly, most of the NWA PPVs with the exception of the Music City Showdown in Nashville last May which still brings up the rear. Starrcade also did about a 1.3, but it was priced at \$19.95 instead of \$14.95, so that show should have grossed considerably more money.

July 23, 1990

The Baltimore Bash appears to have been fairly successful on PPV. I've heard all sorts of figures bandied about, mostly from the NWA side talking about a two percent buy rate, but that's the same figure announced every time out and every time out we find out the real figure is between 1.0 and 1.5. The little bit of input I have is that this one did better than most, but not all NWA PPV's so was probably legitimately in the 1.7 to 1.8 range which is a gross in excess of \$3 million on the show. With four of those each year, plus the 900 number (virtually pure profit) and ad income, it serves one to question how the NWA is really losing as much as people say it is

even with the poor house show business. Crockett's ad income was \$4 million annually when he sold it and it has to be at least that much, if not more now. A \$3 million PPV is \$1.2 million in the company's coffers and if the 900 number does another \$7 million, how can the company really lose that much? Probably because all these figures need to be taken with a grain of salt.

August 20, 1990

The WWF's Summer Slam show on 8/27 should do a near Wrestlemania buy rate. It won't do the money most likely, because of the difference between a \$29.95 average purchase price and \$24.95, but the thought from here is the buy rate should approach the 3.8 percent that Wrestlemania did. If that's the case, you are talking about a show that should gross in excess of \$10 million and could even top \$12 million (Titan's share is about 40 percent of that total, which is at least \$4 million).

November 5, 1990

It's too early to get a reliable PPV gauge, but early expectations for Havoc are about a 1.2 to 1.5 percent buy rate. However, since the price for this show was \$19.95 as opposed to \$14.95 for most previous NWA PPV events, even though the buy rate was down from Baltimore, the gross (estimated \$3.85 million) from PPV should be in the same ballpark. Since this show had less overall interest going in than Baltimore (and since TV ratings have fallen since that time), it appears financially wise that the NWA is better off charging the higher price because the overall revenue is greater.

November 12, 1990

-Halloween Havoc appears to have done a 1.3 percent buy rate, which means all added up it should be a \$3.3 million show. The buy rate was significantly down from the last (Flair-Sting) show, which is said to have done about a two percent buy rate, but with the list price increased from \$14.95 to \$19.95, while the revenue should be down from the last one, it's still decent.

-Legitimately, the Buster Douglas-Holyfield match on PPV did a 6.8 buy rate (a gross of \$36 million) for a comparison to a Wrestlemania.

December 3, 1990

The WWF's annual Thanksgiving PPV show took place in Hartford, CT, not too far from the company's offices in Stamford...On PPV the show did just slightly below what it did last year, doing roughly a three percent buy rate, which at a \$22.50 list price means the show grossed in the \$9 million range (of which, Titan's cut is about 40 percent). So, given the wrestling glut on free television and the general state of the business, the show has to be considered financially a success.

December 24, 1990

From early estimates, it appears the Starrcade show did in the same neighborhood on PPV as the Chicago show. Maybe a 1.0 to 1.5 percent buy rate from early estimates which, if it is more than a one percent, they should be happy since it had a \$19.95 price tag so even a one percent buy rate would be a \$2.6 million gross, which would leave WCW with enough that the show was more than worthwhile.

January 8, 1991

Apparently Vince McMahon must not think the disappointing buy rate for last year's Wrestlemania had to do with the \$29.95 price tag because cable operators were given the word two weeks ago that this year's show will be priced at \$29.95.

January 15, 1991

The Paul Kagan newsletter came out with its summary of 1990 PPV events. Now it should be noted the figures in the Pay-TV newsletter are what the event promoters report, in other words, they are the exaggerated figures rather than actual figures. However, the rankings are probably somewhat legit, if you go on the assumption that all promoters exaggerate their PPV business to an equal percentage (which probably isn't a safe exaggeration which means any figures listed aren't really worth being printed). Anyway, the four WWF PPV events were listed as Numbers two through five out of the 32 PPV events of 1990, trailing only the Buster Douglas-Evander Holyfield fight. But even the exaggerated figures listed the recent Starrcade with a 1.1 percent buy rate, which has to be considered a disappointment since it lists Wrestle War at 2.0, Bash at 1.9, Halloween Havoc at 1.8 and Capital Combat at 1.5 (which can be safely assumed all figures somewhat exaggerated). The point, if there can be one made, is that Starrcade may have legit dipped below a 1.0.

February 4, 1991

Royal Rumble appears to have done better than a three percent buy rate, which is by far the highest of any previous RR show. That would mean a PPV gross of approximately \$8.9 million

February 25, 1991

For Titan to top last year's company gross for WM, given the smaller live gate, the PPV total gross needs to be roughly \$20 million--which at \$30 average price would be 667,000 total buys--or a 4.7 percent buy rate.

March 11, 1991

A few notes on the Wrestle War show. First off, the show appears to have done either a 1.1 or 1.3 percent buy rate, depending upon which source one chooses to believe. What that means is the show was ordered by somewhere between 140,000 and 170,000 homes, which constitutes

a total gross of \$2.8 to \$3.4 million. WCW's share of this would be between \$1.1 and \$1.4 million.

April 1, 1991

Despite what was said about the Wrestlemania show having the largest PPV audience ever, which was stated dozens of times during the broadcast, the reality is that the buys fell below that of the Mike Tyson-Razor Ruddock fight on PPV just a week earlier and wasn't even in the same ballpark with major fights. Of course, lying about PPV numbers is nothing new in wrestling (or boxing for that matter). Preliminary figures indicate the show did a four percent buy rate, which would be 520,000 buys and a \$15.6 million gross (Titan's share of that would be \$6.25 million). From a buy rate standpoint, it was the second lowest Wrestlemania ever, only beating out last year's Hogan vs. Warrior match. At the same time, the past two years have had \$29.95 list prices as compared with lower prices in previous years. Last year, when the figures came in for Warrior-Hogan, it was considered a huge disappointment. Basically, this year's numbers were just about the same. However, given all that has happened, I think everyone is just relieved to get the show over with and happy with that figure. In hindsight, things didn't work out as a whole anywhere near the way the company would have wanted them to when the war started. But with the war over, they were able to turn back up the Iraqi connection, do the angle of burying Hogan with the flag, wave the flag and the last two weeks of hype worked a lot better than the final weeks of hype last year. Between PPV (\$15.6 million), the Sports Arena live gate (\$800,000) and Canadian closed-circuit sites (estimated \$300,000) the show did a total gross of \$16.7 million, putting it in fourth place among the seven Wrestlemania shows, just slightly ahead of Wrestlemania IV and ahead of the first two which were done without a significant number of homes having PPV capability. However, since such a high percentage of the revenue was from PPV, the Titan actual gross from the event--in the \$7 million range--was the smallest of any WM since the PPV era was ushered in with WM3.

April 8, 1991

It appears that the numbers listed here for the Wrestlemania buy rate last week were way high. Keep in mind that I personally don't trust any PPV figures to begin with, but here is the information as I have it. In mid-week, several sources claimed the real buy rate for Wrestlemania was 2.8, and not the 4.0 listed here last week and far from the unlisted but all-time record amount claimed on the broadcast and again on syndication this past week. It was cleared up that even if the show had set a record that there is no way the announcers would have any kind of reliable information on that during the broadcast, particularly since the replay show wasn't due to start for a couple of hours. The 2.8 sounded unbelievably low, considering last year supposedly did a 3.8 and that was considered as something between a major disappointment and a flop, and previous WM's had never done below a six. Well, as the week went on, Titan sent out a press release claiming that the show appeared to have the largest audience in the history of any event on PPV, and at about the same time sources in Viewers Choice in mid-week, with 160 systems out of 455 reporting figures, ascertained the buy rate at 2.8 and said the final count should fall somewhere between a 2.5 and 3.0. The few systems I've

got contacts with, however, indicated the percentage as very close in most cases (and even better in a few) than last year but well below pre-WM VI levels. If the 2.8 figure is real, and it is the most repeated figure within the industry and seems to be from as good a source as possible, then, from a purely business standpoint, forgetting any thoughts of moral character, exploitation or whatever, it says more about this year's Wrestlemania than anything else. If you combine the live gate (\$745,000), Canadian closed-circuit (estimated at \$360,000 U.S.) and PPV (a 2.8 rate would be a \$10.9 million gross revenue)--the show did \$12 million in gross gate receipts. All three figures, live attendance, closed-circuit attendance and PPV buy rate would be the lowest of all seven WM's. Although the live attendance at *Madison Square Garden for the first WM was larger than this year in Los Angeles, the actual live gate this year did top the first WM which did \$502,000. Titan's share of the pie (not its profits, but Titan's gross receipts) from the show should be between \$4 and \$5 million provided the PPV numbers are legit.

April 15, 1991

Wrestlemania figures are turning into something of a story as well. Sources within both Viewers Choice and Request continue to place the buy rate between 2.8 and 3.0 percent. Turner Home Entertainment Research, which admittedly can't be labeled unbiased, although it's a department totally independent of the wrestling company, said its national research indicated a 2.8. WWF sources insist that number is way low, with the real number being (3.3/3.5/4.6--take your pick). Within the company sources have acknowledged it was the lowest buy rate in Wrestlemania history. One person blamed the proximity to the Tyson-Ruddock fight (which it came out publicly as doing a 6 buy rate but cable sources say 4.5 is closer to accurate, but it definitely beat out Wrestlemania legit) although others are saying the \$29.95 price tag is simply too high for PPV wrestling. If one looks at the past four Wrestlemanias, and granted there are so many variables involved here that taking these numbers at face value alone may not be valid--you'll see 1988's show did a 6.3 rating at \$20; 1989 did a 6.0 at \$25; 1990 did a 3.8 at \$30 and 1991 did a 2.8 at \$30. Your first day of economic class should tell you the optimum price to charge for a Wrestlemania then should be \$25, and two straight low rates at \$30 should be the hint. Another interesting controversy is the size of the actual universe. The New York Times ran a story this week about PPV, which, by the way, predicted the Foreman-Holyfield fight would do \$64 million on PPV which sounds ridiculous from this end, and the story said the total universe was 17 million homes, the same figure Titan gave me. Other sources say that when you add up the Viewers Choice and Request Homes you may get 17 million, but the number of unduplicated homes (many homes get both VC and Request, thus are added up twice) the real universe is 13.3 million as of right now. The size of the universe has apparently been exaggerated all along up to this point as well. The declining buy rates for all wrestling PPV shows at the universes increase is also something to note as to wrestling's future. PPV is definitely the future of wrestling, but when "real" sports get into the game, just as they got into cable TV, regular TV (in the 50s) and everything else, wrestling's popularity and influence in the new technology drops. Still, if a company can do just a two percent buy rate when there are 40 million homes in the universe at \$25 a pop, the company itself will gross more than \$8 million, and if you multiply that by four or five shows per year, the sum is greater than the total revenue of live gates that the WWF is drawing during an entire year right now. In other words, even if live business becomes

a dinosaur industry, the wrestling business should stay healthy from PPV and merchandising revenue, even if the original projections of companies doing \$50 to \$100 million per year in PPV revenue now seem outlandish.

April 22, 1991

Japan Super show did about an 0.6 buy rate at \$9.95 which means WCW should gross roughly \$250,000 from the show if that figure is accurate. Also shows that 0.6 is probably the bottom figure a WCW PPV can draw since it was tape delayed (which hurts the excitement of being live), had angles and wrestlers that were never pushed on television and had no interviews on any show building it up. Since Wrestle War did 1.2, shows about half the audience is hardcores that will buy anything and other half of PPV audience needs the angles, interviews and familiarity with the wrestlers to order the show.

May 27, 1991

Very preliminary figures indicate a buy rate of one percent for Superbrawl, which should come as no surprise. The Japan PPV show appears to have done around an 0.6 or 0.7 buy rate. The company was expecting an 0.5.

June 3, 1991

SuperBrawl did between an 0.8 and 1.1 buy rate, depending upon whom one chooses to believe. Since the Japan show, with no hype really, did an 0.6, I doubt this could have done less than a one, but those figures means the gross revenue for the show should be between \$2.3 and \$2.8 million. The one saving grace for this company, and wrestling in general in this country, is the continued expansion of the PPV universe, which will probably reach 22 million by this time next year. As the universe expands, even a one percent buy rate will be enormously popular. Nobody really knows if buy rates for wrestling will decrease, and by how much, when changes come like the universe increases and when more popular sporting events invade PPV but those stories will tell more about the future of the wrestling business in this country than any booking decisions or TV ratings over the short haul. There is talk of AT & T getting into the PPV business, and if that's the case, at some point every household with a phone (which means virtually everyone) will have access to these shows.

June 10, 1991

According to WCW sources, the SuperBrawl PPV did approximately 140,000 buys, which is about a 1.04 percent buy rate and grosses \$2.8 million, of which the WCW share is roughly \$1.1 million. In comparison, the February Wrestle War PPV did about 155,000 buys and a 1.2 buy rate, Starrcade did a 1.0, Halloween Havoc a 1.2 and last year's Bash did a 1.7

June 17, 1991

The UWF Beach Brawl show was scheduled to have a universe of 2.3 million homes, but in the final few days before the show, several companies who had scheduled the event canceled with no reason given, although one would think lack of response would be that reason, so the total universe is probably less than two million homes. Certainly the buy rate had to be below an 0.2, and how much lower it was than that, we may never get an accurate count.

June 24, 1991

The UWF show may have been the least-purchased live event in the history of pay-per-view and it certainly was of pro wrestling on PPV. It drew approximately an 0.1 buy rate and 2,000 buys nationally. Previous lows on national shows have been the WWF Wrestling Classic, when cable was in its infancy (47,000 homes), Superclash III (35,000 homes) and Starrcade '87, when Titan basically pulled a power play on Crockett as limited the universe to 1.3 million homes (40,000 homes). The gross revenue is about \$30,000 which means Abrams' share would be about \$12,000 although some guaranteed deals may mean the revenue was slightly higher than that. It's nowhere near enough money to come close to breaking even.

July 29, 1991

Depending upon which source one chooses to believe, the buy rate for the Great American Bash show was between a 0.7 and a 1.0, with the most reliable figures being approximately 145,000 orders or a \$2.9 million gross, which would be about an 0.97 buy rate, which is slightly lower than SuperBrawl and one of the lowest, but not the lowest, in company history. The next show is the one where there is danger of a significant fall in the buy rate.

September 6, 1991

Our preliminary SummerSlam PPV estimates are the show did around a 2.7 percent buy rate which would be about 405,000 orders and \$11.1 million based on figures from 24 systems, 21 of which were down from last year. Titan was going to release a figure on Thursday claiming a 3.6 percent buy rate. Pay-per-views Magazine projects a 3.5 buy rate based on interviewing 13 systems, one of which beat last year, 10 of which did worse and two of which did about the same. The SS buy rate was well down from the previous two years which did approximately 4.8 and 3.9 percent respectively based on our figures (Multi Channel News reported the numbers as 5.0 and 3.1 respectively for the two previous years) but it figured to be since buy rates in general are down for wrestling and because the previous two SS shows had much stronger issues in the main event going in.

September 9, 1991

Summer Slam didn't perform as well as it has over the previous years. Some believe that having the event air on a Monday night when most kids are beginning to start school may have hampered the buy rate. Many cable operators felt there just didn't seem to be the interest in the matches that there were last year. Of all the cable operators surveyed, none mentioned

negative publicity regarding steroids as a possible cause. Speculation as to why the WWF wrestling events haven't performed at the same level as past years are attributed to many factors. One school of thought is it's simply poor economy. Another school of thought is that wrestling already hit its peak and is leveling off. Not being a wrestling person and basing my assumption on what I read in the Observer, it appears the real test will come when the WWF offers a card which has a strong line-up, in contrast to Summer Slam. If buy rates for that show are low again, then it may be that wrestling has seen its peak.

Joel Schofield
Director of Operations
Pay Per Views Magazine

October 17, 1991

The second WWF PPV show, set for December 6 at the HemisFair Arena in San Antonio, will be kept a secret from wrestling fans in order to not affect the buy rate for the Survivor Series. Cable companies and PPV distributors have been contacted over the past two weeks regarding the show and have been told to keep it quiet but sources within the cable industry have confirmed that it's a WWF event. It's technically right now a three-hour window (which means about a two hour, 45 minute show) simply being listed as "Special Event" with a \$12.95 suggested price (approximately half the price being charged for Survivors the previous week) and there is to be no publicity that it is a WWF event.

November 4, 1991

So after all that, it's time to head off to Chattanooga, for Halloween Havoc '91, which had the misfortune of going head-to-head with the biggest football game of the year on cable (Giants vs. Redskins on ESPN) and the seventh game of the World Series. **While almost all expectations were that this would have a negative effect on the buy rate (WCW sources said they would have been happy just to garner a 1.0 buy rate)**

November 11, 1991

WCW's Havoc PPV show on 10/27, while generally well received by Observer readers, was at best only so-so from a buy-rate standard. WCW sources were indicating a buy rate of 1.0 percent (which, considering everything, would be okay considering the show live went head-to-head with the seventh game of the World Series which drew a 32 rating on television, plus the Giants vs. Redskins which was considered the most attractive Sunday night ESPN game). A 1.0 would be the same rate as the Great American Bash PPV show (the War Games did a 1.2 in February and SuperBrawl did a 1.1 in May) and would be among the lowest of all WCW PPV shows thus far. However, sources at Request indicate the actual national buy rate at about 0.7 percent, which would be the lowest of all-time for any major PPV show from either of the two major companies. I believe the all-time low buy rate for a WCW PPV event was 0.8 for the Starrcade '89 "Iron Man" and "Iron Team" tournament. Very limited sources we have indicate

the buy rate to be about an 0.9, or just slightly lower than the Bash. If the 0.7 figure is correct, it would indicate approximately 104,000 buys and gross revenue of \$2.08 million, both figures lower than any major WCW PPV show in recent years. At 1.0, the gross revenue would be approximately \$2.96 million. The promoter's share of the total PPV gross is between 40 and 45 percent, with the remaining cut going to the cable companies and the distributors, and according to one promoter, the minimal costs of putting on a show of this type to the promoter would be approximately \$400,000. There were also complaints voiced within the cable industry at the card, including a letter from Request TV to WCW. The complaints were directed at the excessive blood (eight men bled during the show, although two of them were unintentional) and they wanted better explanation beforehand of all future gimmick matches because of the generally poor response to the Chamber of Horrors match.

November 18, 1991

Most cable sources indicate that with all the replay showings that the Havoc PPV show did an 0.8 buy rate, which would mean a gross of about \$2.33 million. Buy rate would be the lowest of any WCW PPV show except the Tokyo Dome card on taped delay which had virtually no hype involved with it.

December 9, 1991

-Based on a very limited amount of information, the Survivor Series show appears to have done in the low twos as far as buy rate which would mean total buys would be down a significant number from last year but total revenue would be only slightly down from last year because list price went from \$22.50 to \$24.95. Last year's show did approximately \$8.8 million in total revenue, although the buy rate was three percent. I can't even begin to speculate on how Tuesday's show will do, because even though the first show was bad and left me with the feeling of not wanting to see the second, WWF probably has enough hardcore fans to still do between a 1.0 and 1.5 anyway. The closest thing to a show like this previously was the No Holds Barred match in December, 1989 which pulled in a 1.6 buy rate for the same \$12.95 price that the Tuesday show is listed for. At the same time, that show had a lot more advertising for several more weeks, plus trying to run one week after a PPV, and throwing in Thanksgiving weekend when cable companies and down and nobody is going to order anyway, and you are talking about many people who normally would order not getting around to it, particularly when it comes to companies where busy signals in ordering PPV shows are prevalent. Almost all indications were that this show did worse than last year, although that's to be expected given the fact the business itself is down, PPV is becoming oversaturated and the economy isn't so hot.

-Because of the Olympics, it is expected the PPV universe will grow from roughly 16 to 17 million right now to approximately 22 million, which means if WCW will be able to maintain a one percent buy rate per show over eight shows, you are talking about gross revenue of \$35 million (of which, the company's share, minus the cable company and the middle-man's share, should

be about \$14 million), which, added to other income, should be enough to make things a lot more profitable (or closer to being profitable at any rate)

December 16, 1991

-WWF's experimental "Tuesday in Texas" PPV show took place on 12/3 in San Antonio.. . The 90-minute long show (which ended at 90 minutes on the dot because satellite time is charged by 30 minute interval and this was, by WWF standards, a show run on a shoe-string budget with no advertising other than on the weekend television, five matches, and no production frills like grand ring entrances or pyrotechnics. Most in the cable industry, who look at the bottom line, considered the show a success because they didn't believe going in the WWF could pull so many buys with only six days of lead time and no outside advertising. Anyway, Tuesday in Titan appeared to have done about a 1.1 percent buy rate (or roughly the same as most WCW PPV shows over the past year) but with some companies not carrying the show (with the mistaken belief it would die with no advertising, not realizing that what sells these shows isn't outside advertising but television hype and I think if anything, this proves it), the universe was down a tad, so the gross was in the \$2.0 to \$2.1 million range. So you can look at those numbers in many different ways. The buy rates were the two lowest for Titan in a few years. The combined revenue grossed by Titan Sports (in excess of \$4 million) from these two shows is greater than any single Thanksgiving show had in the past. There were some complaints among cable viewers as if they felt they paid for the first show which was simply hype to get them to buy a second, but they were minimal.

-Most national estimates indicate that Survivor Series the previous Wednesday in Detroit did between a 1.8 and 2.2 percent buy rate, with our estimates indicating that would be approximately a \$7.9 to \$8.5 million in gross revenue--well done from the estimated 3.0 buy rate from the previous year (blamed within the cable industry on the show being held on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving as opposed to its traditional Thanksgiving night, although the WWF made the change specifically because it believed since Thanksgiving night is one of the worst nights of the year when it comes to television viewership, it was a bad night for a PPV. The point I'm making here by bringing this up is that everyone, whether they be cable execs who know nothing about wrestling or WWF execs or those of us who analyze this, can only make conclusions after the fact because nobody really knows going in whether Thanksgiving is a good or bad night for PPV or if PPV is simply declining or if interest in the show was down as compared to previous years).

December 23, 1991

It now appears that Tuesday in Texas did around a 1.0 buy rate, which is in the league with the recent WCW PPV shows, which would be about a \$1.9 million gross, give or take a few hundred grand.

January 10, 1992

Preliminary estimates are that Starrcade did a 1.2 buy rate, which is actually the best for a WCW PPV show since the War Games show in February, which either says a lot for the tournament concept which we knocked or for holding a PPV show the weekend after Christmas. I'm sticking with the latter. If those figures are correct, we're looking at a \$3.7 million gross which would be a record for a WCW PPV show.

January 20, 1992

Latest estimate is that Starrcade did about a 1.1 percent buy rate, which would translate into approximately a \$3.4 million total gross (of which the WCW/TBS share should be about \$1.4 million).

February 3, 1992

Very sketchy early estimates peg the 1/19 Royal Rumble PPV from Albany, NY buy rate at somewhere between a 2.0 and a 3.0 buy rate, which would be approximately 330,000 to 500,000 buys. That is specific enough to say the show was somewhere between a disappointment and the lowest buy rate ever for a major WWF PPV show (at a \$7.6 million total gross) and a major success (at an \$11.5 million total gross). Or maybe something in between.

February 17, 1992

Latest reports we're getting on the Royal Rumble PPV show is that it did a 1.8 percent buy rate, which would be the lowest of any WWF PPV show ever (with the exception of Tuesday in Texas with the six day lead time). Sounds low to me, but a 1.8 would mean 320,000 buys which would be approximately a \$7.4 million gross, of which Titan's share would be \$3.3 million.

March 9, 1992

A lot of people expected SuperBrawl on Saturday, 2/29 from Milwaukee to be the show of the year... Preliminary figures we've received as of Monday indicated a buy rate around 0.6, which if it holds up nationally has to be a terrible disappointment. While legitimately some of this can be blamed on the increase in price from \$19.95 to \$24.95, one can't blame a fall in purchases by almost half from Starrcade on that. Part of it has got to be attributed to the main event not garnering enough interest. Considering on paper this looked to be a great card and with the debut of Jesse Ventura thrown in, it says there is still a long way to go. Being one month before a Wrestlemania priced at \$29.95 could be attributed by some as a factor, but they've run PPV shows one month before Mania every year and always have done decent business. If the 0.6 holds up, that would be around a \$2.35 million total gross.

March 16, 1992

Coming on the heels of the surprisingly weak showing on PPV of SuperBrawl II (WCW sources claim an 0.8 buy rate while most other sources are saying 0.6 to 0.7 which would mean

somewhere between a \$2.4 and \$3.2 million gross) came figures that showed last weekend was the weakest as far as television viewership in many months.

March 23, 1992

Latest reports have the SuperBrawl PPV hitting at about an 0.6 buy rate which is far and away the lowest for any WCW major PPV event.

April 6, 1992

Viewers Choice is now saying SuperBrawl did a 1.0 buy rate.

April 13, 1992

Very preliminary figures indicate a substantial drop from last year's Wrestlemania on PPV which had to be a major disappointment. The buy rate estimates early are ranging from a 2.6 (\$14.1 million) down to a 2.1 (\$11.3 million). The drop from last year, which itself was a disappointment considering it was a big drop from the previous year blamed on the War angle touching the wrong kind of a nerve with casual buyers, is being blamed on the recession.

April 20, 1992

Based on figures we've received thus far, the Wrestlemania PPV buy rate appears to be a 2.1 percent which would be approximately 360,000 buys and \$11 million total gross (of which, the gross for Titan Sports minus the 50 percent from the cable companies and middle-man's share would be between \$4.5 and \$5 million. If those figures are correct, they have to be a major disappointment considering they show a full 25 percent buy rate drop from last year's Wrestlemania, which itself had to be a disappointment on PPV. We've had almost across-the-board confirmation of a significant buy rate drop from last year. We can try and speculate on the reasons for the drastic buy rate drops in recent years (1987's Wrestlemania reportedly did a 10.2 percent buy rate and even as late as 1989 the confirmed buy rate was around six percent although as more and more events go to PPV and PPV is no longer considered a new toy, the potential for buy rates of this level for pro wrestling is no longer there. My guess is that there are so many different factors involved that it's hard to really pinpoint one or two factors. The key factors seem to be:.. *The \$29.95 price tag. This has to be a factor, because why else would Wrestlemania roughly the same number of buys as a Survivor Series and Royal Rumble shows with far less hype, history and heated key angles being climaxed, let alone the Hogan retirement angle which should have drawn a lot of late buys. The other WWF PPV shows are priced at \$24.95. The Hogan-Savage match in 1989 which was the largest grossing wrestling show ever was also priced at \$24.95. The WWF would counter because they claimed to do a test pricing of the Hogan-Earthquake Summer Slam from a few years back with three prices charged in various parts for the same show and found price to be of little consequence in number of buys. But there are so many PPV shows now, both wrestling and otherwise, that the reaction of

consumers may be different today than it was two years ago if such a test marketing actually showed those results.

May 25, 1992

Preliminary Wrestle War buy rate figures look extremely low, probably the lowest ever for a WCW PPV event.

June 1, 1992

Preliminary estimates indicate Wrestle War did approximately an 0.6 national buy rate (although some sources have estimated it as low as an 0.3), which would be the lowest of all-time from any major PPV show from either of the two major groups. The SuperBrawl PPV show on 2/29, which did, depending upon the estimation one chooses to believe, anywhere from an 0.6 to a 1.0, was priced at \$24.95 list so part of the blame for that show not doing as many buys as previous WCW events could be blamed on the price. But Wrestle War saw the price moved back down to \$19.95, yet there were fewer buys than ever before, so there can be no excuse other than interest in the product is at an all-time low. Even based on the replies to our poll, which has traditionally been between 400-550 (The last major PPV event, Wrestlemania, topped 600 responses) for Clashes and PPVs, even among the hardcores who are being counted on to be automatic buys, some decided to skip this show. Since the vast majority of fans don't have any idea about so many major shows in such a short time, that can't be used as a factor in this show's buy rate either, although it certainly will be a factor by the time the Bash rolls around. If those figures are correct, it would indicate a \$2.2 million gross.

June 8, 1992

Speaking of PPVs, Jim Ross said on John Arezzi's radio show on Sunday night that the Wrestle War show did an 0.61 buy rate, which sounds like a totally honest figure (announcing an honest PPV buy rate may not be a first, but it's certainly in the minority of PPV buy rate announcements in this business and would be a first if it was in another company) which would translate into about 115,000 buys, both of which would be just about the lowest ever.

June 15, 1992

-A lot more information has been released regarding the WWF's Summer Slam PPV show on 8/29 from Wembley Stadium in London...The expectation is that it will be the lowest buy rate of any major WWF PPV show ever. One official projected the buy rate as low as 1.0 percent, with a \$27.50 list price, although 1.5 sounds more realistic since the previous three Summer Slam's have done approximately a 4.8 (for the Zeus match), 3.7 (Hogan-Earthquake) and 2.7 (Savage-Elizabeth wedding).

-Advance for the 6/20 Beach Blast in Mobile, AL is pretty weak.. Only early-line predictions are that the company will be happy with the buy rate if it stays steady with the last one and that Steamboat and Rude may tear the house down in the main event.

June 22, 1992

I would have a WBF PPV report here, however our cable company canceled airing the show because of no orders, which seems to be consistent with most of the country. I've only found two people who saw the show, and neither paid close enough attention to give any kind of a report. It's early for reliable figures, but suffice to say the show was an incredible bomb, with the buy rate expected to be well below a 0.05 and be among the lowest, if not the lowest national PPV buy rate of all-time. Considering the amount of time spent pushing the deal and how hard it was pushed on well-viewed wrestling television shows, the lack of interest is not only a sign of general apathy toward the concept, but outright rejection of bodybuilding by wrestling fans.

June 29, 1992

-World Championship Wrestling's Beach Blast, its second show in an attempt to do PPV shows three consecutive months, took place 6/20 in Mobile, AL.. While it's too early to get anything but a rough estimate, based on reports we had heard before the event and sketchy reports since the event, the show apparently did worse on PPV than the Wrestle War show on 5/17. That wasn't unexpected as I'd been told before the event that WCW officials realized there was no way to pull off so many PPVs in such a short time period and would be happy with an 0.5 buy rate (Wrestle War's 0.6 was the record low). Based on very preliminary information received thus far, the buy rate doesn't look to have approached 0.5, which doesn't bode well for attempting yet another PPV show in three weeks. Considering this show was bolstered by nice plugs in both USA Today and on Entertainment Tonight (both of whom interviewed Jesse Ventura who seems to be the only WCW performer who can get that kind of attention) in the days preceding the event, it again shows that this is one uphill battle.

-The WBF PPV did an estimated 0.02 percent buy rate (about 3,000 buys nationally) which is shockingly weak considering how much effort was put into promoting the product, since that was in the same range as Herb Abrams' Beach Brawl PPV last year and consider the difference and promotional capabilities and exposure between the two organizations, not to mention the WBF was in three times the number of potential homes.

July 6, 1992

Beach Blast drew an estimated 0.4 buy rate, which is an estimated 70,000 buys and \$1.4 million gross, all three of which are by far the lowest of any WCW PPV event in history. WCW's share from the show should be approximately \$630,000.

July 13, 1992

If one figures a correctly promoted quarterly kick-ass PPV show with a line-up of matches that have been built and that people want to see for WCW can do a consistent 0.6 buy rate (a number that two months ago would have sounded ridiculously low) when the homes hit 22 million (which they should by the end of this year), or 130,000 buys (a figure most WCW PPV shows with a smaller universe have topped until the past two months) at \$19.95, means WCW should be able to realize \$1.2 million.

July 20, 1992

The Great American Bash PPV show took place 7/12 at the Albany, GA Civic Center ..Very preliminary estimates are the show did, among the few systems we've gotten reports from approximately the same to noticeable decreases on PPV compared with Beach Blast, or probably an 0.3 to an 0.4 buy rate. Given that this show, aside from Sting vs. Vader, had advertised matches with no box office appeal and wasn't well promoted until the final weekend, it seems this is about as low a level as a WCW PPV is going to do under these market conditions.

July 27, 1992

It appears the Great American Bash did about an 0.4 percent national buy rate. Most systems we've received reports from indicate the number of buys was nearly identical with Beach Blast from three weeks earlier... This show did slightly more than half as many buys as the Bash last year, which is the one that came two weeks after Ric Flair left the promotion and the company was considered in a shambles. Total gross for the show should be approximately \$1.5 million which means the WCW/THE (Turner Home Entertainment) share of the pie should be around \$690,000, a figure slightly up from Beach Blast but still easily the second lowest of any major league promotion PPV event.

August 30, 1992

-Early estimates are the show did approximately a 1.8 percent buy rate--roughly a 33 percent drop from last year. At a \$27.50 list, would be roughly \$9.2 million in total gross revenue and Titan's share at \$4.1 million from the show. In comparison, the previous three Summer Slams have drawn a 4.8 (Hogan & Beefcake vs. Zeus & Savage), 3.8 (Hogan vs. Earthquake) and 2.7 (Elizabeth's wedding). With the big live gate, even allowing for taxes in England and the immense costs of flying everyone to England as opposed to New York, they still should come out ahead of last year financially. It's evident that wrestling on PPV was something of a fad, and while Titan should have no worries for years about being able to put on four profitable PPV shows a year, the days of Titan PPV shows being almost a license to print money are just remembrances of the glory days.

-Multi-Channel News, one of the leading television industry trade journals, published a page three article last week on the decline of pro wrestling on PPV. One company said that the number of buys (not buy rate, which would have dropped more by percentage) for both the

WCW and WWF PPV events has declined 50 percent over the past two years. Cable operators blame the pricing of PPV events as the major reason for the decline. Skip Desjardin of Titan's PPV marketing division disagreed with that assessment. I do as well, since WCW's SuperBrawl PPV at \$24.95 had about double the buys of the two recent PPV shows at \$19.95. Operators have also placed the blame on too much wrestling in syndication, although Titan argued that without syndication, there could be no PPV events. The latter is inarguably the truth, but that doesn't preclude that the former, overexposure of wrestling, isn't a problem. The WWF tried to blame the decline on the economy, as it has tried to blame the house show declines of this summer on, which would be a legitimate factor except if that was the case, television viewing of free wrestling should at least stay even, if not increase (because of money is tight, people would theoretically be home more and thus have more time to watch free entertainment), rather than have hit all-time lows this summer. Another reason operators blamed for the decline is that the stars that drew the big PPV numbers of a few years ago have gotten older, some have retired, and the industry has been unable to create new stars to fill their shoes. Hugh Panero, the VP of marketing for Time Warner's cable also said that the allegations of steroid use of the wrestlers and sexual abuse in the front office has tainted the entire product. Both WWF and WCW officials were quoted as saying they were planning to run four PPV events in 1993. WWF has no plans to run Hot Ticket mini-PPV shows, while WCW has its eye on offering a number of mini-events.

September 7, 1992

Our reports last week of Summer Slam's buy rate appear to have been a little high, as reports by the end of the week indicate a 1.5 buy rate which would be a \$3.5 million gross for Titan Sports out of the big pie. This is a whopping 44 percent drop from last year's Summer Slam. There are plenty of reasons (I really believe the \$27.50 price worked against them; No Hogan, which also accounts for reason No. 1; Decline in wrestling interest overall and Decline in PPV across the board) but this had to send a signal as to the long-term viability of PPV. Certainly Titan is a long ways away from these shows not being profitable and WCW will get there a lot earlier, but PPV will never be what it once was as far as revenue producing.

November 9, 1992

While most of the business news this past week remained negative, WCW reported an 0.95 buy rate for the Halloween Havoc pay-per-view show, which would be more than double the buys of either Beach Blast or the Great American Bash, and the largest buy rate for a WCW PPV show in more than one year. That figure has been heavily disputed during the past week, with others claiming the figure to be as low as an 0.5, or in line with the two previous shows. Based on systems we've received reports from, the WCW reported figure is believable, since many systems doubled the previous two shows in buys, but and one very reliable source says an 0.8 can be documented. In addition, our poll for unexplained reasons, received nearly double the usual amount of responses, although that can be probably attributed to just how strongly most readers felt about the show. The show has to be considered a financial success, although some would argue it would be to WCW's benefit for the show to have done a low buy rate so fewer

people would have seen just how far the company fell. An 0.95 would be about 190,000 buys and \$3.8 million total gross, one of the largest ever for the company, which would be a company gross of \$1.5 million. An 0.8 would gross the company about \$1.3 million or nearly double the previous two shows. If nothing else, a substantial rise in buys at a time when PPV and television ratings and every other factor are on such a steep decline has to be attributed to the hype for the spin the wheel gimmick, which must have aroused some curiosity because it's doubtful much else on the show did, and maybe even more the time between PPV shows. This indicates that running four PPV shows per year, as is Bill Watts' current plan, looks like it's going to make the company more money in the long run than running seven, as had been the plan before Watts took over.

December 7, 1992

National buy rate figures for Survivor Series I'm hearing have ranged from a 1.2 to a 1.7, the former of which would have to be considered pretty bad considering just a few weeks earlier WCW did a 1.0. Even at the latter figure, the gap on PPV between WCW and WWF has never been closer, although it would be a slight increase over Summer Slam.

January 15, 1993

The estimates we have indicate the Starrcade buy rate to be just under an 0.6, which would be about 120,000 buys. With the list price being \$24.95, that means the WCW gross of the PPV money should have been in the \$1.25 million range. Actual revenue from the show increased over last year's Battle Bowl, although the number of buys and buy rate decreased because of the price increase. Since the object is to make as much money as possible (or in the case of WCW, lose the least amount possible), it basically means increasing the price from \$19.99 to \$24.95 was a successful move financially, and will probably mean that all WCW PPV shows will have the higher price tag.

February 1, 1993

The annual WWF Royal Rumble took place on 1/24 in Sacramento's Arco Arena. The show drew an estimated 1.2 to 1.3 buy rate based on very preliminary estimates (Titan's share would be approximately \$2.85 million if those estimates are accurate). With the exception of the Tuesday in Texas PPV in 1991, it would be the lowest buy rate of any Titan PPV show in history, a drop of 10 to 15 percent from the previous low, the 1992 Survivor Series, which, it should be noted, also had a higher price tag so it's a double whammy. I thought the build-up to the show was done about as well as it could be, so even with the upturn in television ratings and slight increases at the houses, the PPV side of the industry continues to decline almost on a show-by-show basis.

February 8, 1993

The [Hogan-Andre] bout [at WrestleMania III] was the first million dollar live gate in history (\$1,599,000), was the largest closed circuit gate in history (\$5,200,000) and set a pay-per-view buy rate record (reported at 10.2 percent, but probably closer to eight percent legitimately, which has since been broken by boxing, but the figure hasn't been even approached again in wrestling). The closed-circuit and buy rate figures appear to be safe bets to remain on the books for many years.

March 8, 1993

Based on updated reports over the past week, it appears SuperBrawl did between an 0.4 and an 0.5 percent buy rate on PPV, which would mean a company gross between about \$850,000 and \$1.1 million on the show. The buy rate would be, at best, the third lowest of any major promotion PPV event, slightly ahead of the 1992 Beach Blast and Great American Bash shows during the period when WCW tried running three PPV shows in a nine week period. At worst, it would be the lowest buy rate ever for a major WCW PPV event. If the mini-movie was the reason for the unexpectedly good showing of the Halloween Havoc PPV, then this just shows duplicating the same idea twice in a short period of time doesn't generate the same results.

April 12 ,1993

We've got little in regard to Wrestlemania PPV buy rate reports which are the most important figures as to whether the show was a success or failure other than talk that it was the lowest Mania ever, but that was a given going in, with several surprising reports around the country of cable systems not even carrying the event claiming a lack of interest (including systems in Chicago and Beverly Hills which says something about its perceived current upscale appeal, but is unexplainable since even at a worst-case scenario this show was going to do better on PPV than anything aside from a major boxing title fight).

April 19, 1993

It appears that Wrestlemania did about a 2.1 percent buy rate, which would be about 430,000 buys or roughly a \$5.8 million gross for Titan. The buy rate would be the lowest of any previous WM, as was expected but the amount of the drop between this year and the previous year would be less than has been the case for the past several years. In comparison with dropping buy rates across-the-board on WWF PPV events, this small drop should be considered a success and again show that when it comes to PPV, because of his mainstream name appeal which others' lack, Hogan makes a huge difference. One could estimate that Hogan's appearance at this show was worth somewhere in the neighborhood of \$1.2 million to Titan based on PPV and a hard to determine additional amount when it comes to live gate.

June 7, 1993

Our reports indicate the buy rate for Slamboree at between 0.3 and 0.4 percent, which would make it the lowest buy rate for any PPV show from one of the two major companies in history.

That would indicate WCW's share of the gross at around \$800,000, which wouldn't be the lowest ever because of the \$24.95 price tag as opposed to the \$19.95 price tag on a few of the poor performing PPV shows of 1992.

June 21, 1993

-No word at press time on King of the Ring PPV, but most expect it to fall between the 1.0 and 1.5 percent level. Going head-to-head with the NBA finals did nobody any favors, not to mention the game they went head-to-head with is now being called in some circles the greatest basketball game in history. In 1993, that is probably very close to if not equally as stiff competition as running a PPV head-to-head with the World Series, as WCW often has during Halloween Havoc, although in looking back, surprisingly, even going head-to-head with the World Series doesn't seem to have nearly the effect on the buy rate as one might ascertain. A replay of the show is scheduled on PPV on 6/22.

-TBS is claiming internally that Slamboree did an 0.7 buy rate although most cable estimates are in the 0.4 range.

June 28, 1993

King of the Ring did approximately a 1.1 to 1.2 buy rate, which would be the lowest of any WWF PPV event in history. If that figure is accurate, it would gross Titan Sports approximately \$2.6 million from the show. While that figure amounts to a lot more revenue than would be garnered this summer if the house show business was successful, the proliferation of PPV events by sheer numbers makes them less and less special to the public as noted by the declining buy rates and revenue. The King show's orders were cut nearly in half from Wrestlemania. Mania, largely due to the reappearance of Hogan, did a far less severe year-to-year decline than any of the WWF PPV events during the period he was gone, showing Hogan's worth, at least for a specific one-time comeback, on casual fans pocketbooks. However, this number shows that most of those casual fans only wanted to pay and see Hogan once. Whether this is because Hogan is perceived as yesterday's news and drew at Mania based on "nostalgia," or fans saw his marked size difference at Mania and like Ultimate Warrior, someone whose main gimmick for success was freakish size lost a great deal of appeal when the size was no longer there, is something we can only speculate on. However, for short-term cash flow, running this show is going to generate a lot more money than running house shows all summer would alone. And given the precarious state of the industry on several fronts, short term has to take precedence over long term because by the time long term gets here, the entire landscape could change markedly and any long term plans wouldn't even be applicable.

August 2, 1993

Based on very sketchy figures, it appears the Beach Blast PPV show did in the 0.4 to 0.5 percent buy rate range. The figure was expected to be slightly below that of Slamboree, which would gross WCW somewhere between \$950,000 and \$1.15 million.

September 13, 1993

Reports we are getting indicate SummerSlam did between a 1.1 and 1.3 buy rate [280,000 buys], which would be a Titan share estimated \$3.1 million gross. Told it was about 10 to 12 percent down from Royal Rumble and about 35 percent down from last year's SummerSlam, or roughly the same as King of the Ring, which has to be a disappointment considering the great job of promotion that went into the show. If that's the case, it shows the added viewers of Raw haven't translated into PPV buys. In examining WCW ratings ups and downs, they don't coincide with the ups and downs of PPV buys either.

September 27, 1993

Jon Hand of Front Row Entertainment claimed PPV analysts have told him to expect a 1.0 to 1.5 buy rate for the UWFI event, which sounds ridiculous on the surface since that would be equal to SummerSlam, although at an 0.5 buy rate, his company would make a \$228,385 profit and there have been Tough Man tournaments that have done 0.5 buy rates as late as this year and they don't have any television show building up their product nor are the competitors names and personalities well known, which is Hand's argument in saying this will be a successful and profitable promotion. Of course WCW's recent PPV shows have hovered in that area, and that is with years of history (which admittedly is a negative in many instances), several names with significant name recognition among wrestling fans and hours of both cable and syndicated television to sell the events.

October 4, 1993

Stats on the Fall Brawl PPV show.. PPV looks to be about 90-95,000 buys, which is about an 0.45 buy rate, or a little more than one-third of SummerSlam (est. 260,000 buys). The Chavez-Whitaker fight did 1.1 million buys which shows how wrestling's standing in PPV has dropped in comparison with boxing over the past few years when WWF shows used to equal the big boxing matches and WCW wasn't that far behind.

October 18, 1993

Joe Hand, whose Front Row Entertainment promoted the PPV portion of the event to the United States and Canada, claimed the Union of Professional Wrestling Force International (UWFI) PPV show garnered roughly 100,000 buys (which would be an 0.48 percent buy rate). If this number is accurate, and keep in mind tradition when it comes to PPV numbers announced by the companies producing the show, it not only would have to be considered a huge success, but by wrestling industry standards, be considered a success of mind-boggling proportions. It would be slightly more buys than WCW's Fall Brawl on 9/19 in Houston, which drew an estimated 0.46 percent buy rate and 95,000 buys which had all the aforementioned promotional advantages. The most recent WWF PPV event, SummerSlam, which was one of the best hyped PPV shows ever, did an estimated 265,000 buys (1.2 percent buy rate). Hand reported that the buy rate

numbers he received were not consistent system-by-system, with the variation by systems ranging from 1.1s down to 0.2s, and said he was most impressed with the showing in Quebec (better than one percent) since his show went head-to-head with the American League Championship Series game involving the Toronto Blue Jays. Highlights of the PPV were scheduled to air nationally on the syndicated George Michael Sports Machine show and a segment is scheduled on UWFI for the TV-show "Hard Copy." Hand said the show garnered a small profit. If the 100,000 buys is accurate, at a \$14.95 price tag, the promotion's gross on the event would be \$673,000. In an earlier interview, Hand said his company was budgeting \$895,000 for expenses, of which \$285,000 would go to advertising. In late October the show will be replayed, rather than a new PPV show broadcast since UWFI doesn't have another show between now and late October. The UWFI's next major show will take place 12/5 at the 48,000-seat outdoor baseball stadium in Tokyo, but won't air on PPV in this country because Request and Viewer Choice didn't have an available date for airing a lot more than the fact that the main event would be unable to be broadcast on that specific show. A second PPV show will air in February 1994, and Hand, who claims the next show will do an even more illogical 1.5 buy rate (if it does, Hand's company will make a \$1.7 million profit on the event and it would beat out every wrestling PPV event next year except Wrestlemania), is planning on running quarterly PPV shows next year. Others in the wrestling industry with PPV contacts strongly dispute these numbers, citing areas where the UWFI show did only one-fourth the number of buys as recent WCW shows and less than one-twentieth of WWF shows. On the other hand, several callers from various parts of the country left messages saying the phone lines were jammed attempting to order the show and they were unable to get through, reports that we haven't received of late from either WWF or WCW PPV shows. In Pittsburgh, one group that phoned in poll results noted they had to wait until the replay show to view it because of the inability to get through all the busy signals representing last-minute buys. I was stunned that the number of our poll responses ran ahead of the pace of most recent WCW and WWF PPV shows, when I was expecting responses at about 25 percent of the level of the major PPVs, even though the audience reading this publication would be far more likely to purchase an international wrestling PPV event than any other audience. As of press time, we were awaiting independent information from a variety of sources and insider PPV industry newsletters as to their read on the show's buys. There is no doubt that the advertising of the event as "real wrestling," largely on sports broadcasts the week before the event, created more mainstream curiosity in this event than any wrestling PPV show in recent years with perhaps the exception of Wrestlemanias. The question going into the event was whether that curiosity would translate into buys. The real big question now is whether the people who bought the show are interested in seeing the product again, and whether that audience can sustain itself through quarterly shows. If the 100,000 figure is accurate, it was largely based on the curiosity of seeing pro wrestling that was purporting to be "real," since only a microcosm of that audience would have ever seen UWFI on tape beforehand or have any knowledge of its wrestlers, none of whose names were used in marketing the event. Whether that curiosity can be turned into interest in the style and the competitors and whether the audience that purchased the event found it interesting enough to want to see it again will determine whatever long-term fate UWFI wrestling has in the United States. Based on our totally unscientific poll, the prospects of return business among those who saw the show look bright.

November 8, 1993

-It appears that Halloween Havoc did the same buy rate in the 0.5 neighborhood that the past few WCW shows have done, so to this point the more frequent shows haven't adversely affected the buy rate. Break-even is said to be around 0.35. If Battle Bowl can maintain that number with the close proximity to Survivor Series, that would seem to indicate the WCW fan base is willing to support more frequent PPV shows, although my belief is Battle Bowl is the show that is going to take it on the chin.

-Based on further cable industry reports, it seems the reported 0.5 buy rate for the UWFI PPV show looks to be unrealistic. We've been unable to get any independent national buy rate estimate, although several regional estimates we've received were much lower than 0.5. Reports are that Joe Hand Promotions is still going ahead with plans for four UWFI PPV shows in 1994.

November 22, 1993

It was too early to get an accurate buy rate on 11/12 Ultimate Fighting Championship PPV, although a Los Angeles Times story hyping the event said it needed an 0.5 to break even.

November 29, 1993

-Battle Bowl PPV was a flop by every standard. Thumbs up: 9 (7.8%); Thumbs down: 106 (91.4%); In the middle: 1 (0.9%). The number of responses was roughly half of a normal WCW PPV, and from early reports, **Observer reader interest paralleled national interest because the buy rate appears to be between 0.25 and 0.3 (around 60,000 buys)--easily the lowest for any PPV from a major group in history.**

-Choose which source you want to believe department. Buy Rate magazine, which traditionally seems to have been the most accurate trade journal covering PPV, listed the UWFI PPV show as doing 108,000 buys, which would be more than most of the recent WCW shows. However, other sources claim the figure is nowhere near that amount. The next UWFI PPV show has tentatively been pushed back to March.

December 6, 1993

-Early estimates are that Battle Bowl was ordered in 60,000 homes, or an 0.27 buy rate, which is believed to be the first major office PPV show that may not even show a profit.

-Survivor Series did much better than Battle Bowl of course, with preliminary estimates showing 185,000 buys, which is still only an 0.82 buy rate. It would be the first WWF PPV show to fall below the one percent buy rate. The combined estimated company revenue of both Battle Bowl and Survivors combined would fall about \$130,000 to \$150,000 short of what Survivor Series

itself did last November, and roughly \$1 million short of the 1991 Survivor Series. When it comes to Survivor Series, it was pretty well expected going in this would be the case so the lowest buy rate ever doubtfully shocked anyone. It did cause some in WWF to re-evaluate the Survivor Series formula, as it did a few years back in taking it from a show of elimination matches to simply a regular card of matches last year. The elimination series worked well both in public interest and in the ring when the company had a lot more depth in the late 80s.

January 10, 1994

Based on reports thus far, it appears Starrcade did an 0.55 buy rate, which would mean about a \$1.35 million WCW/THE gross from the show. This was roughly double the number of buys and revenue of the previous Battle Bowl PPV, although well below the WWF's Survivor Series in which there were many who believed this show's buys would approach which would make the first time a WCW show was in the ballpark on PPV of a WWF show during the same time period. It's either the best or second best WCW PPV showing of the year, although given the "nature" of the build-up, that may be more of an aberration than a sign that fortunes have turned around. Overall, WCW's attempt to run four PPV shows in a fourth month period at the end of the year has to be considered mildly successful. Three of the four shows were in the same 0.5 range that the less frequent early year PPV shows were, which seems to be the WCW core audience.

January 17, 1994

Pet peeve of the week--every single media source that continually hypes the Howard Stern PPV as the "highest-rated entertainment event in PPV history." What, now all of a sudden WWF suddenly has become a sport? The same newspapers that ignore wrestling because it's not a sport now claim the Stern show (which, depending upon who you choose to believe did between a 1.3 and 1.7 buy rate, far lower than any Wrestlemania and numbers virtually every WWF PPV show before late 1992 easily outdistanced) was the biggest entertainment draw in PPV history.

January 31, 1994

At press time we have no concrete buy rate estimates for the Royal Rumble other than it appeared to be significantly up from Survivor Series and in the 1.0 range.

February 14, 1994

A few notes and corrections having to do with television ratings and buy rates. Latest estimates are that Royal Rumble did about 205,000 buys, or an 0.9 buy rate, which would be an estimated \$2.3 million Titan gross. The number appeared to be up slightly from Survivor Series, but still significantly lower than any other Titan PPV in history and would represent about a 25 percent drop in buy rate as compared with the 1993 Royal Rumble. Even with the noticeable increase in television viewers and strong showing nearly every week by Monday Night Raw, this isn't translating into more people either attending house shows or purchasing PPV events.

February 28, 1994

Based on response here it appeared the buy rate was well below most WCW PPV shows, and preliminary reports indicate that is again an accurate barometer as the early estimates are an 0.45 buy rate or about 99,000 buys which would be a \$1.11 million WCW gross. Reports indicate because of not advertising a main event in the weeks leading to the event that the advance buys were well down from previous shows, and the expected late pick up wasn't strong enough to even equal the average WCW PPV in total buys.

March 21, 1994

WCW officials are claiming SuperBrawl did a .67 buy rate, which if true would be a success. While national cable sources have listed a .5 and I've been worked big-time in the past about WCW buy rates, I think the source of the .67 this time is accurate. If it is the case, WCW isn't trailing WWF by much right now and that's before throwing Hulk Hogan into the equation.

March 28, 1994

As expected, this year's Wrestlemania appears to have actually drawn the lowest buy rate of any WM in the past, a 1.7--down about 15 percent from last year, but between live and PPV that almost surely will be by far the biggest wrestling show of the year. That figure would translate into about 390,000 buys or an estimated \$5.27 million company gross.

April 25, 1994

New England Sports Network ran a story on Hogan agreeing to the deal reporting Hogan as receiving \$600,000 or 40 percent of the company gross per PPV event. I have no idea if those figures are even close, although if that figure is correct, for WCW to equal its current profit level on PPV events by adding a deal like this into the mix, it would have to increase its buys for all three events Hogan will appear on to 227,000 (an 0.99 buy rate, or slightly above the level the WWF has drawn in its past two non-Wrestlemania PPV shows, Survivor Series and Royal Rumble), or it would be a money losing deal for PPV. While it is conceivable a first Flair-Hogan match correctly promoted would do that business, it would be a lot more difficult to average that over three shows. Several weeks back Multi Channel News, in an article about WCW potentially acquiring Hogan got feedback from major PPV companies in which the consensus was Hogan would add to WCW's buy rates, but even with Hogan they would trail WWF. It is not unusual for companies to pay above the figure that would be profitable in certain situations if the feeling would be, as it would be in this case, that just having Hogan would also aid them in acquiring

May 22, 1994

Spring Stampede did an estimated 122,000 buys (0.53 buy rate) which would be a \$1.37 million gross. The buy rate was either even with or down slightly from the previous two PPV shows.

June 6, 1994

Based on early reports, it appears that Slamboree will do in the neighborhood of a .48 buy rate, which would be 108,000 orders and a \$1.21 million company gross, which is down only slightly from Spring Stampede. This should be considered as a good sign since Spring Stampede offered a stronger show on paper and it was only five weeks between shows. Although there has been no correlation between show quality and buys of subsequent shows in the past, perhaps the reason the buys held up so well is because the company satisfied its audience largely with Spring Stampede.

June 20, 1994

Cable trade publications are predicting the lowest buy rate in WWF PPV history for King of the Ring.

July 4, 1994

*Preliminary estimates indicate the WWF's King of the Ring PPV show on 6/19 drew a 0.73 buy rate, by far the lowest in the history of the company. Unlike the other major shows of the past week, this all-time low figure was expected going in since King had such a weak line-up on paper, a world title match with a challenger who clearly the public felt wasn't ready for a main event or a real threat, and that for the show to do business it would have to be based on the drawing power of the return of Roddy Piper. By two weeks before showtime it was obvious to everyone that Piper's return was nearly totally overshadowed by the return of Hulk Hogan to WCW, and it was clear this show was going to do a record low. The WWF's previous all-time low for a PPV show was an estimated 0.82 for Survivor Series last November, but that show came during a week of a major boxing PPV extravaganza and just four days after a WCW PPV show (which also did its all-time worst). This show fell nearly a full .1 below that mark, and did so during a week without anywhere near the level of significant competition on PPV. Translated, that means approximately 165,000 buys and a \$1.85 million company gross on the show, both the lowest figures in many years for WWF PPV shows, and figures barely ahead of what WCW's Starrcade and SuperBrawl shows did over the past six months.

July 11, 1994

WCW officials are still predicting a 1.0 buy rate for the Bash at the Beach show, which would be a major success.

August 1, 1994

Bash at the Beach drew an estimated 1.02 percent buy rate, the biggest WCW buy rate since 1991, or slightly more than double that of Slamboree. That would mean it was ordered in about 230,000 homes with a WCW PPV gross of \$2.58 million. Hogan's approximate cut between the

PPV and the live gate would be \$680,000, which isn't bad for one night's work, especially when his opponent did most of the work in the ring. Hogan deserves credit for doing a great job going coast-to-coast, getting on network talk shows, and calling in his markers for the celebrity tie-in for last-minute hype. As far as actual profit goes, if we go under the assumption that a typical PPV needs \$800,000 as a break even mark, the last WCW PPV show did about a \$400,000 profit. Starrcade with Flair-Vader probably did about a \$700,000 profit (that's on the show, WCW and THE split the money and who knows what actually comes down as company profit other than it isn't nearly enough to wipe out the millions in losses). Throwing in Hogan's share, the extra money spent in advertising and expenses of the like, this show probably did about \$550,000 in profit, or more than a typical show but even with the larger audience and the company's largest PPV gross ever, the profit probably wasn't as much as two of the shows in the last seven months. If Hogan can maintain it at this level for the next two shows, his signing is a success.

August 14, 1994

Privately WCW officials are expecting the next PPV with the War Games to be way down on buy rate because of no Hulk Hogan, but expect the number to be huge for Detroit.

September 5, 1994

SummerSlam on 8/29, the first event ever at the United Center in Chicago.., No preliminary estimates on buy rate either.

September 12, 1994

-At press time we were still waiting for buy rate estimates on SummerSlam. All we've heard is that it was expected to be lower than last year's 1.3 buy rate, but that hardly comes as a shock.

-WWF officials are insisting that King of the Ring did a better buy rate than Bash at the Beach by a 1.3 to an 0.9 margin despite WCW and trade journal claims to the contrary.

-AAA/IWC announced the line-up for its 11/6 PPV show from the Los Angeles Sports Arena which will be a joint promotion with WCW... Break-even is said to be about 40,000 buys (less than an 0.2 buy rate), which hardly seems difficult considering the house show business the group has done.

September 19, 1994

A few more notes about SummerSlam... We've received conflicting reports on the PPV. The two figures we've been given are a 1.35 buy rate (310,000 buys/\$3.8 million company gross) and an 0.89 buy rate (205,000 buys/\$2.53 million company gross). Both figures come from non-affiliated sources (ie not from WWF or WCW although we understand WWF is also claiming the 1.4). The former would be an excellent figure given the current marketplace in that it would rank

slightly ahead of last year given figures we received (WWF itself claimed a 1.7 last year but most trade journals in the PPV industry pegged it at 1.2 or 1.3). The latter is more in line with the current market standards and would be neither a success nor failure, although a sizeable decrease from last year. We are hoping to get more info this week that will at least give us reason to believe one figure or the other is the closer one to accurate, or if accurate lies somewhere in the middle, and answer the important question once and for all about whether or not Domino's really delivers.

September 26, 1994

-The one bit of good news coming from all this is that the SummerSlam PPV according to estimates from additional sources appears to have done between a 1.0 and 1.3 percent buy rate, which has to be considered a success given the market conditions. The estimates are the show did almost the same, or only slightly less buys than last year.

-Early returns indicate UFC III did a 0.65 buy rate (150,000 buys), or more orders than all but one (Flair vs. Hogan in Orlando) WCW PPV over the past two years (the WCW shows actually grossed more money because they charge \$24.95 instead of \$14.95 but also spend tons more to put on a show). The figure approached the buys WWF did with King of the Ring. That's with no television, either basic or cable. That's with no basic television advertising and no major company pumping millions of dollars into marketing the event and the personalities. That's with no Hulk Hogans or Undertakers, let alone Ric Flairs, Bret Harts and Stings. Even the first UWFI PPV show, which drew a surprising amount of buys even though it wasn't a major financial success, took out a decent amount of television advertising on sports shows. This came almost exclusively from hype on the PPV preview channels.

October 3, 1994

WCW is claiming a 0.6 to 0.7 buy rate for Fall Brawl, but other sources indicate it as just below 0.5.

October 10, 1994

...A 1.28 buy rate equals roughly \$825,000 in Hogan's pocket for one show, a 1.56 equals just over \$1 million.

October 31, 1994

WCW set a few company records and hovered around several others for Halloween Havoc. While there are no reliable PPV estimate available at press time, it was generally believed based on advance orders one day ahead that this would easily shatter the company's all-time record for orders and total revenue, with those in the company predicting a 1.8 to 2.0 buy rate, which would nearly double buys and money generated by the company's record-setting Bash at the Beach in July with Flair vs. Hogan. Cable industry sources were more conservative on their

predictions, figuring closer to a 1.5, which would still be more than WWF did for SummerSlam and almost surely will do for Survivor Series. But if anyone were to seriously believe this fluke buy rate based on the ultimate hot-shot was indicative of WCW surpassing WWF in popularity, they are deluding themselves.

November 7, 1994

It's funny when the second biggest grossing day in the history of the company is almost a disaster. Such was the case with Halloween Havoc '94. Preliminary estimates from independent sources put the buy rate at about 0.95 percent, well under the 1.5 predicted by cable industry analysts and the 2.0 widely predicted within WCW for the career vs. career match between the two biggest stars in the United States of the modern era. That would mean the show did an estimated 220,000 buys and grossed about \$2.45 million for the company, of which just over \$600,000 would go to Hogan. In the unlikely event that Flair really is retired, throwing in the figure he received to get him to do the job and this show was a loser. But few believe Flair won't be back, as a babyface, early next year. WCW sources are claiming a 1.6 although the company itself hasn't made any public claims, other than they were in an uproar claiming it was all wrong on 11/1 when the 0.9 to 1.0 figure was reported by Steve Beverly, a figure expected to be reported later this week in the cable industry's leading trade publication, Multi Channel News. Two other WCW sources admitted it was a major disappointment, one giving us an 0.9 figure, while another source said the Beverly report was inaccurate and that the show definitely did better than Bash at the Beach. This was the one match where going back in time should have meant a bonanza, and it did well, but expenses and expectations were such that this buy rate was a major disappointment and a sign of just how far WCW still really trails WWF when it comes to overall popularity.

November 14, 1994

-Further reports this past week from independent sources that track PPV buys have pinpointed the Halloween Havoc buy rate at approximately 0.97. WCW sources publicly are insisting the show did a 1.45 and remain furious at suggestions otherwise, although the wrestlers were actually told at the Disney tapings it did a 1.6, and other sources within WCW are saying anything from 0.9 to 1.4.

-The biggest show put on by a foreign-based promotion ever in the United States took place 11/6 at the Los Angeles Sports Arena, "When Worlds Collide," the AAA/IWC WCW-produced PPV event. No buy rate figures will be available until the end of the week, but due to botched up television promotion of the PPV, the buy rate isn't expected to be anything special.

November 21, 1994

Multi-Channel News is reporting the AAA show will do an estimated 0.3 buy rate (other sources are pegging the figure at 0.25, or approximately 55,000 buys and an estimated \$500,000 after split gross), which considering the exposure level in this country and marketing force behind it,

has to be considered a miracle when compared with what WWF and WCW are doing nowadays with an exponentially greater push, hype and exposure levels. If that's the case, the show will break even or be marginally profitable, which would show that as a product, they are, to borrow an expression, almost bullet proof.

December 5, 1994

Survivor Series '94 on 11/23 in San Antonio wound up drawing an evenly mixed set of responses... We have no buy rate estimates at press time.

December 12, 1994

We won't have a buy rate estimate for Survivor Series until next week.

December 19, 1994

UWFI PPV in the U.S. on 11/11 did less than an 0.1 buy rate.

December 24, 1994

-Preliminary estimates were the UFC IV show was going to do about an 0.85 buy rate (approximately 196,000 buys and \$1.76 million gross), but that would be a figure before whatever refunds cable companies may be giving because of the finish not airing. That actual figure when all is said and done will be significantly lower although nobody can estimate just how much lower right now. It was a huge increase from the three previous UFC's which ranged from 0.4 to 0.65.

-A couple of interesting notes when it comes to recent PPV buy rates as reported by Multi-Channel News, which is considered the most accurate independent authority within the industry. The publication reported the AAA buy rate at 0.28 (we had been told the figure was 0.29 so it's almost identical). While WWF and WCW always do more buys (although AAA actually just slightly beat out the buy rate of WCW's November 1993 "Battle Bowl" PPV event which did 0.27), it was considered something of a success within the industry due to the number of buys considering the mishandled promotion of the event. The typical TVKO boxing PPV shows without a big name draw like a heavyweight title fight or a Julio Caesar Chavez or a martial arts show will do between 0.18 and 0.34, so it was in the upper half of that spectrum. The major boxing events do far better than wrestling, but a simple boxing PPV without big names trails wrestling by a large margin.

-The big surprise is the report that the UWFI PPV on 11/11 did an 0.65 buy rate (approximately \$1 million gross), basically identical to UFC III. We had been told that show did less than an 0.1, and based on the reaction here, or lack thereof, that latter figure seemed consistent. If that former figure is accurate, it means we and everyone else involved with pro wrestling in this country have totally underplayed the interest level in UWFI because that would be more buys

than Flair-Vader did at Starrcade '93 and on the heels of what the 1994 King of the Ring did. Despite what is being reported, I can't accept an 0.65 figure as being accurate and don't sense any measure of significant interest in UWFI. But if it is, considering the exceedingly positive reaction to the last show, they have far more potential than anyone has recognized to this point. However we are told that UWFI, through Philadelphia's Front Row Entertainment, is planning several PPV shows for 1995.

-Another surprise was the report that the WWF Survivor Series did between a 1.2 and 1.4 buy rate (other sources have pegged it at 0.8 to 1.0 although WWF is claiming a much higher figure than 1.4), which would be a huge increase from the previous year and would have to be attributed to that, at least for one night, Bob Backlund was marketable since he was the main pushed item leading to the show. With so many pro wrestling PPV shows all apparently doing well in such a short period of time, it seems to point out that those who believe pro wrestling is overexposing itself on PPV may be off base at this point. In fact, trade journals are now saying that wrestling and wrestling-type PPV events in total next year with the current players (WWF, WCW, UFC, UWFI and AAA) continuing and new players entering the scene, may double in revenue next year. I think that's being overly optimistic, but recent events seem to indicate that the public is ready and willing and already has bought new forms of pro wrestling, even without widespread television exposure to back them up. In which case, PPV will make this one healthy business at the top level even if the house show aspect stays at its current level. This is not telling anyone to run a PPV before they are ready, because a smaller group like an ECW (I'm not even considering SMW because they just aren't going to run a PPV) could lose enough on one PPV if it doesn't do well to threaten its existence, but the fact is in 1995, nobody is going to be a player in this country without being on PPV. Expanding into a national promotion isn't done by running house shows in California, it's done in 1995 by running PPV nationally.

January 2, 1995

-Early predictions for Starrcade were in the .6 to .7 range which with Hogan's 25% cut, can't be considered financially successful unless it tops .9).

-Latest reports are that UFC IV is expected to do in excess of an 0.9 buy rate which would be in excess of 200,000 orders, which is said to be about the same as Survivor Series (the Survivor Series figure has been hotly disputed with wide variations depending upon who one talks with) and almost surely more than Starrcade. USA Today ran a brief story on 12/27 about the show going over and estimated that about one-third of the systems cut the show off 12:00 into the final match. The story never mentioned the participants or the outcome of the final match that went over. The story indicated that the cable systems that cut the show off early in most cases would simply offer one of the replays free to those who had ordered the original showing, so it won't be a matter of refunding money in most cases although some systems are crediting either the entire purchase price of \$19.95 or half the purchase price depending upon the system. On the replay shows of the last PPV which is still running and will continue through New Years Eve, they edited out the Jason Fairn vs. Guy Mezger match so the show would fit into two hours and still air the complete Gracie vs. Severn. Compuserve, which the promotion went on-line with

after the show, partially because so many didn't know the outcome, set an all-time record for any conference in its history for the post-match of UFC IV.

January 8, 1995

Multi Channel News has corrected itself on the UWFI buy rate. It's now listing the buy rate as 0.12 percent or about \$175,000 in after split gross. The original 0.65 figure sounded ridiculous on the surface as we'd written. It would be probably the fourth lowest wrestling buy rate in history, trailing only the Herb Abrams PPV, the LLPW show and the second UWFI.

February 6, 1995

At press time we have no Royal Rumble buy rate estimates.

March 6, 1995

Very preliminary reports indicate the buy rate for SuperBrawl will be in the 0.9 range, or only slightly trailing WWF's Royal Rumble and in the ballpark with UFC IV)

March 7, 1995

Latest estimates are that the SuperBrawl PPV show did a 0.95 buy rate, just a shade lower than the two Hogan-Flair matches last year and a shade behind WWF's most recent PPV show, the Royal Rumble. If that figure is accurate that would mean approximately 220,000 buys and a \$2.45 million gross, of which approximately about \$654,500 would be the Terry Bollea share of the PPV and house gate. WCW officials have claimed between a 1.1 and 1.2 buy rate, while WCW competitors are pegging the figure at 0.6 to 0.7. The show has to be considered from a business standpoint as a major success even though as a show it left a lot to be desired.

April 10, 1995

-While no figures were available at press time, the early insiders predictions of a two percent buy rate (and my gut tells me those predictions are conservative) for Wrestlemania would mean Titan Sports would gross approximately \$7.4 million on the show making it one of the three or four biggest money shows in the history of the business.

-Estimates are that WCW Uncensored did an 0.96 buy rate which would make it the biggest money show in the company's history because of the increase in price it would be a \$2.84 million gross. Hogan's share of the show would be about \$725,000. For all the knocks that Hogan is killing the company, the facts are he's bringing in to the company more money than they've ever made before. You can question much about him and it's all valid, but that's the price you pay for getting someone who can double your buy rates. The only question is if his own deal that pays him so much makes that a fair trade-off and right now after two more big PPV shows, the answer seems to be leaning toward the Hogan signing as a plus once again.

April 17, 1995

While the World Wrestling Federation at its post-WM press conference claimed the company expected it would be the largest grossing wrestling event of all-time (which at no point was a realistic prediction), the final buy rate appears to have fallen short of even the most conservative predictions. Depending upon which source one choose to believe, estimates vary from 1.3 to 1.8 percent. At a major cable convention this past week in Los Angeles, the fact that the show "flopped" despite so much mainstream publicity was a leading topic of discussion with estimates ranging from "1.3 to 1.5 tops," based on almost across the board responses that buys were down about 15 percent from last year (which did about a 1.7) for a show that had almost no mainstream publicity going in. Other sources have pegged the figure only slightly higher, with another national survey of major markets coming in at a 1.56 buy rate (365,000 buys) which would be approximately a \$5.8 million gross to Titan Sports--well behind the Larry Holmes-Oliver McCall fight six nights later. The live gate in Hartford, CT was in the \$750,000 range with a sellout of 15,000--more than double the largest house show gate in the United States since Wrestlemania X in Madison Square Garden and seventh largest ever in the United States. Business in Canada, while we don't have a number, was said to be much lower than in the U.S. which is probably because Taylor has minimal name value as a celebrity in that country and they built the show around him. Total revenue between the Wrestlemanias X and XI will probably wind up very close to one another because of the increase in price from \$29.95 to \$34.95. At the convention, the blame for the disappointing figure (according to one source, based on the level of advanced buys, a figure above 2.0 should have materialized) was pointed at the price increase. There is no doubt there was tremendous mainstream interest in the Lawrence Taylor angle since there is a direct correlation between the start of the angle and an increase in television ratings for WWF shows. The difference in crossover publicity was like night and day. For whatever reason, this didn't materialize into more people ordering Wrestlemania.

April 24, 1995

-TCI reported the national buy rate for Wrestlemania at 1.1 which indicates the final figure may even be lower than the disappointing preliminary projections.

-Preliminary estimates on the buy rate for UFC look to be hovering at around a 1.05 buy rate. If that figure holds up, it would mean approximately 240,000 buys and a \$2.15 company gross. National estimates from various sources this past week have ranged from 0.95 to 1.2. Multi Channel News is expected to report this week an estimated 1.10 national figure. UFC promoter Art Davie said on Monday he had limited reports but by systems they ranged from a low of 0.59 to a high of 1.5, and he expected to achieve the goal they had going in of 220,000 buys (0.95). The figures are on line with, or perhaps slightly ahead of the largest number of buys in the history of WCW and in the same neighborhood as recent WWF PPV shows such as Survivor Series and Royal Rumble over the past two years. Because UFC goes for \$19.95, the total dollar gross is still below that of the four biggest WCW (the two Flair vs. Hogan and Vader vs.

Hogan matches) events but ahead of virtually every other WCW PPV event in history. It's well behind WWF total money grosses but is gaining ground and based on trends, it would appear there is a strong chance that by 1996 that UFC will surpass Wrestlemania in total buys since it was ahead in buys in several systems. When it comes to Japan, it appeared from press coverage this past week that UFC has already surpassed Wrestlemania. In any case, the UFC success is amazing without any television, either cable or syndication, which to generate interest, and very limited mainstream media publicity. It appears UFC is largely gaining appeal right now from the cable barker channel ads and from word-of-mouth based on previous shows and the home videos.

May 1, 1995

Semaphore Entertainment which promoted the event is claiming a 1.2 buy rate and 280,000 buys for UFC V, which would be substantially more buys than any show WCW has ever done. Even with the lower price, the gross revenue to the promoters are the split would exceed \$2.5 million which would be roughly the same figure as the Hogan-Flair PPV matches. Wrestlemania did between 325,000 and 350,000 buys. In many systems UFC beat out both Mania and the Holmes-McCall fight although Mania's strong showing in the Northeast put it ahead nationwide.

May 29, 1995

At a Thursday lengthy "team meeting" on 5/18 at Titan Towers, designed to bridge the gap between talent and office, the World Wrestling Federation informed its wrestlers of a new and far more restrictive company drug policy and Vince McMahon gave an upbeat speech, informing wrestlers of the current financial condition of Titan Sports and said there were already signs of a turnaround... McMahon said that 54% of the revenue from Titan PPV shows are taken off the top and go directly to the cable carriers. He claimed a 1.0 buy rate for In Your House and said he was very pleased with that figure. There were pre-show predictions that the price cut would jump the buy rate to the 1.5 to 1.7 range. Outside estimates have estimated the buy rate at 0.83, which would be approximately 180,000 buys and a \$1.23 million company gross. Depending upon which source one chooses to believe, the buy rate was either the lowest ever for the company or second lowest, topping only last year's King of the Ring. The total revenue because of the lower price would definitely be the lowest. That's not necessarily a failure for the company's financial outlook long-term but certainly can't be considered a positive. It was an added show and at that figure still should have been profitable. A recent Forbes Magazine article on UFC, if the figures can be believed, stated it costs \$600,000 to do a UFC PPV, and figuring with its production values, special effects, higher payoffs and more extensive advertising, break-even for a WWF PPV should be substantially higher even in this shorter form. It really won't be until the latter stages of this year before we can really evaluate whether or not both WWF and WCW adding PPVs will be best for the financial health of the industry. But let's not kid anybody. When cutting the price in half results in less people buying the product, you can spin things all you want. It's still not a success. And it's certainly not a sign of a popularity turnaround.

-Very preliminary estimates for Slamboree on 5/21 are a buy rate between 0.60 and 0.77 which would be approximately what Starrcade with Hogan vs. Butcher drew or perhaps slightly lower (company PPV revenue ranging from \$1.5 million to \$1.9 million).

June 12, 1995

DM: The PPV with the largest gross would have probably been Wrestlemania V (Hogan vs. Savage from Atlantic City. The largest actual buy rate would have definitely been the Wrestlemania III (Hogan vs. Andre Pontiac Silverdome) but at that point in time there were only about four or five million PPV households so the total number of buys and revenue were lower than Wrestlemania V even with the higher buy rate percentage. I couldn't give accurate numbers because all figures in those days were so heavily exaggerated but I believe Hogan vs. Andre did a legit 8 percent buy rate (claimed at 10 percent). There were boxing matches with Ray Leonard in that era that did higher buy rates, but not many. As far as total gross, the big boxing matches now easily outdistance the big pro wrestling matches. The margin was closer in the mid-to-late 80s but there was never a period when the big boxing match of the period wasn't ahead of the biggest WWF match.

-WWF is claiming a 1.0 buy rate for In Your House and proclaiming it a success. It should be noted that despite outside predictions that the lowering of the price would result in a greatly increased number of buys, WWF officials were more cautious in their predictions citing the new shows as uncharted waters. Independent sources claim an 0.83 buy rate. WCW is claiming that their sources say In Your House did only slightly more buys than Slamboree. No matter how the story is spun, it's hard to accept cutting the price down for a product by 40% and registering the same amount, or even less buys than usual for the product, and call it a successful marketing endeavor.

-WCW is outwardly claiming an 0.8 buy rate for Slamboree, but within the company it is no secret that they'd be thrilled based on early returns to come out with an 0.60 to 0.65, figures which nobody is trying to spin as a successful return. Sources, not within the WCW office, claim that the number circulating within WCW for buy rate was 0.57, the same as independent sources. Some in Titan claim the figure could be as low as 0.50. If we are to accept Titan numbers, not only did its show strongly outdistance WCW when it came to buys, but also would have drawn more money. If we are to accept WCW numbers, Titan barely had more buys but WCW would have blown them away when it comes to revenue. Independently, we can estimate the Titan show at 187,000 buys and a \$1.26 million company gross. WCW can be estimated at 130,000 buys and a \$1.46 million company gross, of which an estimated \$365,000 would be the Hogan share.

July 3, 1995

Preliminary estimates are that WCW's Great American Bash PPV show drew between an 0.48 and 0.60 buy rate depending upon which source one chooses to believe. WCW sources are

claiming the latter saying the show did almost identical to Slamboree and considering there was no Hulk Hogan on the show, if that's the case, that does say something for Hogan as a drawing card. Even if the latter figure, by unaffiliated sources, is to be accepted, meaning 110,000 buys and a \$1.24 million company gross, the show would still have been more profitable than Slamboree with Hogan. Slamboree grossed an estimated \$1.46 million on 130,000 buys, but Hogan's cut of that would be about \$365,000. Either way, the end result of these two shows appears to be that there will be a greater separation of power between the Hogan camp and the Flair camp with the Flair camp gaining a little bit of control, although no control over anything having to do with Hogan. There is still the argument that the sleazy come-on at the end of the Main Event show where they strongly suggested the possibility of a surprise Hogan-Vader match on the Great American Bash may have been responsible for a lot of late buys and that the show could have done far worse without it. If one believes that to be the case, it would mean it would have been Hogan's drawing power that saved the show.

July 24 ,1995

-Prelim estimates for UFC VI are a 1.3 buy rate, which would be a slight increase over the previous show, largely boosted by an exceptionally strong replay which indicates word of mouth was incredibly strong after the show ended.

-Most reports indicate King of the Ring did a 0.65 buy rate which would make it by a sizeable margin the lowest rated WWF PPV in history. That would indicate about 150,000 buys and a \$1.68 million company gross. If one year ago you told me that UFC would be beating WWF on PPV, I would have doubted it but considered it as a possibility. If you told me they'd be more than doubling the WWF, I'd have thought you were out of your mind.

July 31, 1995

We don't have any early estimated on In Your House II but hopefully will have some by next week. Based on reports we've received, the UFC people claimed an estimate of 1.3 on the Monday after the event which is obviously just a preliminary estimate. Other sources have actually later in the week estimated as high as a 1.4, which would be the same figure as WrestleMania. Figuring a 1.3, that would be 300,000 buys and a \$2.7 million company gross. Bash at the Beach was also successful since when you put Hogan vs. Vader in a cage match, you're going to do business, with estimates of an 0.82 buy rate but at a higher \$27.95 price tag, which would be about 190,000 buys and a \$2.37 million company gross

August 7, 1995

WWF is claiming 1.0 buy rates for In Your House I and King of the Ring, figures 20 to 35% higher than other estimates, but claiming 0.8 for the most recent PPV.

September 4, 1995

It's too early to get a buy rate, but since it was SummerSlam, I'm guessing it was well ahead of the past three WWF PPV events. One thing that went quietly without mention is that WWF cut the price on this show from \$27.50 as in the past to \$24.95.

September 25, 1995

-WCW's Fall Brawl took place on 9/17 at the Asheville Civic Center before a sellout crowd of about 6,600... Based on all immediate response indicators, it appears the buy rate for this show will be well down from previous WCW shows which doesn't bode well since Hulk Hogan was on this show and that takes 25% off the top of the gross

-The first run of the Ultimate Fighting Championships appears to have done about an 0.85 buy rate (200,000 buys/\$1.8 million) although that figure can be misleading in a number of ways. UFC traditionally does much stronger on the replay showings than pro wrestling events. For example, the last UFC did an additional 0.2 just on replays. In addition, we've received no estimates on how much UFC promoters Semaphore Entertainment Group will have to rebate to cable companies and merchandise for consumers for make-goods for those who didn't see the finish of the main event. The total, even figuring into strong replay showings would probably fall from UFC VI, although with the less attractive show, that isn't much of a surprise. UFC officials were figuring to increase based on September being an easier month to get people to watch television as compared with July, but with a weaker main event, the reasons seemed to be offsetting.

-WWF is claiming a 1.0 buy rate for SummerSlam (235,000 buys/\$2.64 million). Other estimates are lower and even some higher, ranging from 0.8 to 1.1. That figure would be about a 30% decline from last year's SummerSlam and even more revenue wise because the price was lowered, which is being attributed to the overabundance of PPV wrestling events as compared with last year. It is not being considered a success since it's the WWF's No. 2 event of the year.

-WCW ran two events over the past six weeks--Collision in Korea appears to have done an 0.15 buy rate (30,000 buys/\$175,000) and we don't have a buy rate on the K-1 PPV but it was right about the same figure or slightly better. Since both shows were on taped delay, the costs for the shows and break-even points were considerably down from a typical PPV show (a live PPV show appears to need about a 0.25 to 0.3 buy rate to break even). With the heavier advertising budget, K-1 was probably less profitable than the Collision in Korea even if it drew slightly more viewers. Initially WCW was planning on doing two more taped K-1 shows before the end of the year but no word on any future dates so I get the idea that is at least no longer etched in stone.

October 2, 1995

-Semaphore Entertainment Group is contemplating some major changes in its UFC format in response to UFC VII going overtime, costing the company an estimated \$650,000. UFC Producer Campbell McLaren admitted that the cable industry is furious at them for not ending the show on time and estimated that it would cost SEG roughly one-third the revenue of what

would have been an 0.9 buy rate on the 9/8 show or a nearly \$2 million gross. When UFC IV didn't end on time, SEG was able to soften the blow with cable customers to where the losses were a great deal less by offering UFC merchandise and free replay showings. Cable companies were a lot less forgiving on the second time when it came to pacifying customers when they complained about not seeing the finish of the final match. Because of its situation with both cable companies and the huge loss of revenue from the most recent show, McLaren admitted it was imperative that nothing of the sort ever happens again and felt that the next show, the Ultimate Ultimate, the company's biggest show to date, couldn't have come at a better time.

-It appears that the Fall Brawl show did a .48 buy rate (est. 113,000 buys/\$1.21 million) which would be by far the lowest of any PPV Hogan has ever appeared on and the lowest of the year for WCW.

-The K-1 PPV show actually did about an 0.1 buy rate (est. 20,000 buys/\$180,000) but with all the advertising put into it on radio and in martial arts mags, that had to be a loser.

October 23, 1995

The World Combat Championship PPV show appears to have done about a 0.18 buy rate (estimates are between 0.1 and 0.2) or about 40,000 buys and an estimated \$359,000 company gross, which would be a huge money loser (losses estimated from \$625,000 to \$750,000). The show did strongly in Southern California, but buys were almost non-existent in Chicago (less than 50 in the entire city) and Detroit (around 30).

November 6, 1995

In a number that has to send chills down the spine of WWF officials and actually should for WCW officials as well, preliminary estimates for the most recent WWF In Your House PPV show on 10/22 in Winnipeg have ranged from an 0.35 to an 0.52 buy rate, huge drops from what would have been the previous worst PPV performance in company history. The higher figure was attributed to Gould, a multi-system cable operator which traditionally does about 20% above the national average for WWF events. Other estimates have ranged from the .35 figure up through 0.40, which would make it the first WWF PPV event since PPV's infancy not to crack 100,000 buys, and according to one source, Viewers Choice was estimating 0.4 as the absolute highest figure possible from the show, which would only be at best a \$630,000 gross. Most estimates of the cost of putting together a live PPV are \$400,000 for those with minimal advertising and equipment costs to \$600,000. Because of the \$14.95 price tag, at the lowest estimate, the show may have actually been the first WWF PPV event to be a money loser although most likely they keep expenses down on the cheaper priced PPV events. At any estimate, if there was a marginal profit, it had to be hundreds of thousands of dollars less than WWF would have been counting on from these monthly shows in its budget projections and may not have done all that much more money than the AAA show last year which is staggering when you think about it. I strongly suspect WWF officials will have a much higher estimate from

the show as things usually seem to work out that way. Since PPV events are the both WCW and WWF's main source of revenue since house shows are no longer profitable (and WCW hardly even runs them and WWF has just cut them in half), if any kind of a major turnoff has occurred for whatever reason, it would be nothing short of disastrous, more for WWF than WCW which has the large corporate backing to make money losses really nothing more than paper, unlike WWF which has to either eventually be profitable or go through yet another round of cutbacks, and at worst case scenario, cease to exist.

November 14, 1995

-Those with close ties to WWF claim the In Your House from Saginaw, MI did an 0.88 buy rate, and that the one from Winnipeg, the one that every other figure we've come across, both independent and otherwise, have listed as bombing royally, did right along the same lines, somewhere between an 0.8 and 0.9 (200,000 buys; \$1.34 million company gross). The claim is that the WWF is saying the figures in the 0.4 range are ridiculously low estimates. Gould's early estimate of 0.52 listed last week was revised after more system reports down to 0.46, while sources with Viewers Choice (which one would think would be the most accurate of all because they'd have access to the most legitimate information) and within WCW have pegged the figure at 0.35 to 0.40, which depending upon the source, would range from estimates of 82,000 to 108,000 buys. Now I don't care how you do your estimating, if any method of estimation has a margin of error where a show that does 200,000 buys can be estimated at less than 100,000 or visa versa, either the methodology of taking estimates is less than worthless, or there is a lot of dishonesty going around. Obviously in both the pro wrestling world and the PPV world, the latter statement is a given. If the WWF figures are accurate, then In Your House was a success (not in the ring, where it's pretty well universally acknowledged including internally as being a very bad show) financially and the In Your House series is comfortably holding its own. Using the other figures, as mentioned last week, the most recent show's performance was an outright disaster.

-For Havoc, things go the other direction. WCW sources are claiming an 0.8 buy rate (190,000 buys; \$2.36 million company gross of which \$590,000 would be Hogan's share), which would be very successful. Some would point out that was still a major drop from last year, but last year was the Hogan-Flair retirement match and there is nothing in WCW today that could come close to garnering that kind of interest. Gould, an independent source, was estimating an 0.68 buy rate, which would be good on the surface, but when you consider Hogan's cut of the pie (25%), it ends up being the financial equivalent of 0.51 at a higher price (\$27.95), or no better than what the company was doing before Hogan came around. Of course before Hogan they were doing seven PPV shows, now they are doing 11, so if they just hold their own with what they were doing beforehand, it should be considered successful. That figure would be roughly the same as WCW did last year for Starrcade when Hogan wrestled The Butcher, which at the time was considered a disappointment and the evidence that Hogan needed a strong opponent to draw. With The Giant, the way he was pushed and all, this was the strongest opponent possible at the present time, and from a WCW revenue standpoint, since Hogan takes out such a large chunk, it appears to be less money then Flair and Vader did for the 1993 Starrcade show and

only slightly better than WCW was doing on average shows during the pre-Hogan era. That figure would indicate 160,000 buys and a \$2 million company gross, of which Hogan's cut would be roughly \$500,000.

December 4, 1995

-Preliminary estimates are that the WWF Survivor Series on 11/19 did a 0.57 buy rate, or about 130,000 buys and a \$1.47 million gross. That would compare with an estimated 0.9 buy rate and \$2.32 million from last year's event, or a staggering 37% drop. We haven't been able to get the actual gate for the live show at the U.S. Air Arena but the number in the building was between 14,500 and 15,000 but more of it was paid than we had initially heard. Don't know a figure but it was a lot more than 8,000 and probably closer to 12,000 with a gate in excess of \$250,000.

-The EFC event early estimates are just under an 0.3 buy rate, or about 60,000 buys and an estimated \$539,000 gross. Because EFC spent so little on production as compared with pro wrestling and even UFC or WCC events, this is probably a profitable figure even though the live gate was zero since all the tickets were given away at the last minute in Wilmington. The majority of the buys came from the Northeast, particularly in the New York market so all the controversy caused by politicians which got so much media attention did apparently prove to be the event's saving grace as there was very little interest before all the political hoopla.

December 11, 1995

-Halloween Havoc, which preliminary WCW estimates were of an 0.8 buy rate, while early indie estimates were 0.68, have been lowered. Those in WCW are now claiming an 0.63 for the show and independent estimates are lowered to the 0.55 range. WCW is estimating an 0.55 buy rate for the World War III PPV, while others have independently estimated it at between 0.4 and 0.45 (an estimated 99,000 buys and \$1.11 million company gross). Even at the higher figure, because of Hogan's huge cut from the show, in no way can these figures be considered successful as at best they are doing what they were doing pre-Hogan and in those days didn't have the gigantic payoff for the main event. At the lower figure, it's a lot less pretty.

-WWF is claiming an approximate 0.85 buy rate for Survivor Series. Independent estimates pegged it at 0.57 as reported last week and Multi Channel News was in line estimating between 0.55 and 0.6. In any case it's a substantial drop from last year as WWF last year claimed between a 1.3 and 1.4 for the Bret Hart vs. Bob Backlund match, while others were estimating it at 0.9.

December 18, 1995

For those who have asked, The Ultimate New Years Eve special on 12/31 will be six hours of the best UFC matches from the first seven shows, plus four alternate division matches that

never aired previously on PPV. They did a similar special last year distributed on a limited basis and did a strong 0.3 (for a taped special of matches that had all aired previously) buy rate.

December 26, 1995

Although the day after the event is usually far too soon to get any kind of an accurate reading, Campbell McLaren of SEG said it looked as though the 12/16 UFC show would fall short of a 1.0 buy rate. He blamed it on being the same night as the Tyson fight... He considered what the preliminary indications were as being okay but not great, and with the price raise to \$24.95, it may draw more money than any previous UFC show, but will probably far short of some of the recent events when it comes to total buys.

January 15, 1996

-Reports are that the Ultimate Ultimate did around an 0.6 buy rate for its initial show on 12/16, however any question as to whether or not being on the same night as the Mike Tyson vs. Buster Mathis Jr. fight (which drew the largest prime time audience and rating in the history of the FOX network) was responsible when the replay showings did better than an astounding 0.4 buy rate. Semaphore expects the total audience for the show to hit 250,000, which would slightly top the 1.0 mark and be in line with what the Ken Shamrock vs. Royce Gracie and Shamrock vs. Dan Severn matches did, but with the price increased from \$19.95 to \$24.95, it would be the biggest money UFC show in history grossing an estimated \$2.7 million. In addition, the taped New Years Eve special which aired six hours of highlights of the first seven UFC's did an 0.4 buy rate or approximately \$910,000 with minimal costs involved. The money figures listed may be slightly higher than they turn out to be because most cable systems were offering the two shows together as a package at \$39.95 (purchased separately they were \$24.95 and \$21.95 respectively) and it's unclear how many were ordered as a package deal.

- WCW Starrcade '95 did an estimated 0.36 buy rate, the second lowest buy rate in company history (approximately 83,000 buys and \$1.04 million company gross). Even WCW sources don't dispute that figure which says how bad it must have been, with the company estimated the figure at between 0.35 and 0.40, but the company taking solace somewhat in that number because it beat the WWF. In comparison, the previous year's Starrcade with the Hogan vs. Butcher main event did approximately an 0.7 buy rate, which at the time (which shows just how much this industry changes in one year) was also considered disappointing.

-The WWF In Your House from Hershey, PA, which most figured going in to be the weakest WWF PPV show in history when it came to pre-show interest, did an estimated 0.33 buy rate (76,000 buys and an estimated \$680,000) which would make it at best only marginally profitable. It would be the fewest buys of any WWF PPV show to date, although with the price increase from \$14.95 to \$19.95 it probably beat the prior IYH when it comes to dollars. It should be noted that WWF's own internal buy rate claims are always much higher (often as much or more than double) what other sources claim and it's doubtful it will be any different with this

show, although the company's internal figures admit the big shows are down significantly this year as compared with last year. However, WWF will be increasing the price of Royal Rumble and the other major events from \$24.95 to \$29.95 in 1996, with Wrestlemania most likely staying at \$34.95.

February 5, 1996

-The WWF is claiming a 1.2 buy rate for Royal Rumble. Request sources pretty well confirm that claiming a 1.1 national estimate which would be 265,000 buys and a \$3.56 million company gross, which are figures that defy explanation given the trends in the industry of late. It is clear that the catfighting on television along with the more violent style in the ring and going back to juice is increasing overall interest in both products. Both companies are also going balls out to bring back big names from the past and prominently feature them and that's getting a lot of people who have lost interest in wrestling over the past few years back to the table. The reports we have from WWF are that the show shocked everyone both in the WWF and the PPV industry coming off the string of nose-diving buy rates and nobody was at all expecting this even within WWF. The number of buys more than tripled the December WWF PPV show even though this show saw the price increased to \$29.95. The total gross would be a figure that with the exception of Wrestlemanias, hasn't been approached on any show except big boxing events or the Howard Stern deal in a few years.

-UFC officials expect a strong live gate in Bayamon, PR because UFC videos are the second highest rental video in the violence-loving country and the buy rates in Puerto Rico on PPV have been in the three range, or triple the national average.

February 26, 1996

-Preliminary indications are that the WCW SuperBrawl PPV show on 2/11 did about an 0.63 buy rate. WCW officials are pegging the figure at 0.70, which is conceivably accurate. The number would be slightly higher than Halloween Havoc and be a huge increase over both World War III and Starrcade. The .63 figure would figure out to approximately 148,000 buys and a \$1.86 million company gross.

-Cablevision Systems Corporation, facing political and religious pressure particularly in their home base in Connecticut, canceled airing of the UFC in all its systems two days before the UFC 8 event, along with its scheduled replay showings. In a statement to consumers, the company said they expect to never air UFC or similar type of events in the future...Much of the pressure on Cablevision, which is based in Norwalk, CT and which had averaged an 0.9 buy rate for UFC events in 1995, came due to pressure from Connecticut attorney general Richard Blumenthal and from an organized united religious groups protest of the event in their home base area.

March 4, 1996

-The live showing of UFC appears to have done approximately an 0.8 buy rate (an estimated 176,000 buys; \$1.58 million). In an article in the Philadelphia Inquirer, UFC officials said the break-even on the shows was about \$1 million. In comparison to the two pro wrestling events held during the same nine-day time span, it looks like all three events did in the 0.6 to 0.8 range. At press time we don't have figures from third-party sources in on all three shows

-WWF sources are claiming either an 0.77 (185,000 buys; \$1.66 million) or 0.8 buy rate for In Your House, saying it was the highest for any IYH show since the first one, and that it's the first time an IYH buy rate has increased over the previous one since the start of the series. Ironically WWF officials when there were reports of buy rates in the 0.4 range for the previous two IYH PPV shows claimed that the shows were doing in the 0.85 range at that time. The show combined having the strongest box office main event (Bret Hart vs. Diesel in a cage match) plus coming at a time when interest has picked up in pro wrestling greatly. Others have said the WWF buy rate as along the same lines as WCW's for SuperBrawl (0.6 to 0.7 range)... If the WWF's announced figures are accurate, they may have had more actual buys on the first showing than UFC because UFC wasn't available in as many homes due to the Cablevision black-out of the show. In a sense, this is a feather in the cap of UFC since it drew the buy rate without having any television and this show had, with the exception of the 20/20 piece, no national mainstream promotion the week leading into the show and shows UFC has developed a strong core audience that will watch its product even without most of the biggest names on a show... Given all factors involved, all three shows have to be labeled as successes financially.
March 11, 1996

-It appears the buy rate for the last PPV will be slightly more than 0.7, or slightly below original 0.8 estimates.

April 2, 1996

-In some ways, the most famous Wrestlemania of them all was III, on March 29, 1987 at the Pontiac Silverdome in front of "93,000" fans... . It was the show that put pro wrestling on the map when it came to PPV, drawing an eight percent buy rate.

-Wrestlemania XI was another great promotional build-up, but somehow it didn't pay off and with almost drastic results... the 1.4 buy rate was well below estimates of 2.0 that were considered conservative predictions going into the event.

April 8, 1996

Preliminary reports on Uncensored buy rate range from 0.65 to 0.85 which is a strong figure so if any trouble was going to come out of Hogan changing the show at the last minute, it ain't happening now.

April 15, 1996

-Wrestlemania postscript. Buy rate estimates we've been hearing have ranged from 1.2 to 1.5, or basically about the same as last year (which did about a 1.3). Nothing through the roof, although it'll be probably the most buys of any wrestling PPV this year. WWF sources have said they have no estimate, but preliminary figures indicate a slight increase over last year.

-WCW is claiming an 0.8 buy rate for Uncensored. Estimates we've heard are 0.73, which would be 175,000 buys and a \$2.20 million estimated company gross and if the same contract as he originally signed carries over, about \$550,000 going to Hogan.

April 22 ,1996

-The far more important figure is the buy rate for Wrestlemania. WWF is claiming a slight increase over last year, claiming a 1.7 buy rate and 430,000 buys, which would be very successful. However, they had previously claimed 460,000 buys for last year (now the figure claimed is 425,000), a show which at the time was considered a huge disappointment and industry-wide the figure going around for Wrestlemania XI was a 1.3 buy rate which would be 325,000 buys. The figures going around for this year's show industry-wide are a 1.2 buy rate, or about 300,000 buys--which would be a company gross of approximately \$4 million. Titan sources claim those figures to be way low. TCI, the nation's largest cable company, reported national figures for Wrestlemania as dropping from a 1.1 for last year's show headlined by Lawrence Taylor, to an 0.9 for the 1996 version. Using anyone's figures, it's a revenue drop from last year because the price was lowered from \$34.95 to \$29.95 with roughly the same number of buys. Using Titan figures, the company revenue decrease over last year is \$900,000, while other estimates placed the decline closer to \$1.1 million. It's probably not nearly as negative as that makes it out to be only because last year because of Lawrence Taylor, the expectations were so high and when it didn't deliver, it led to some major belt-tightening. This year with expectations lower going in, even if the results were a slight disappointment, it's exceedingly doubtful it's going to lead to any kind of a budget crunch later in the year.

April 29, 1996

-Reports are that the Pancrase PPV did approximately an 0.25 buy rate (about 60,000 buys and a \$269,000 company gross because of the \$9.95 price tag). SEG is thrilled with that figure, expecting 50,000 buys max and thinking the figure could have been as low as 25,000. The first buy rate was surprisingly high, as even SEG officials admit they went into the first show with zero publicity and didn't do any cross-promotion with UFC. It was better than shows like the World Combat Championship (which had far more publicity) and pro wrestling PPVs which had more of base audience already in the U.S. such as WCW's Collision in Korea and its AAA When Worlds Collide shows, and basically the same as the first Extreme Fighting PPV, which had tremendous media publicity in the Northeast because of the last week successful attempt to have the event booted out of New York, making it something of a forbidden fruit.

May 13, 1996

It appears that the EFC II PPV show did about an 0.2 buy rate (40,000 buys; \$359,000 company gross), which wouldn't be profitable given all the costs involved.

May 20, 1996

Coming on the heels of the EFC political fiasco, Viewers Choice of Canada has canceled airing the 5/17 UFC show but has given indications it is only sitting out because of the imminent pressure and would broadcast the 7/12 event. Cablevision in the Northeast has maintained its policy to no longer broadcast UFC events, so the total universe will be in the neighborhood of 20 to 21 million homes as opposed to close to 25 million for WWF and WCW events. The loss of Canada is doubly significant because UFC has done two to three times the buy rate in Canada as it has done in the United States in recent events, peaking at 60,000 homes which is a huge chunk of business (like about \$540,000 in company revenue) to lose, basically equivalent to a show that went overtime and the finish didn't air on the PPV in terms of unrealized revenue.

June 3, 1996

Preliminary estimates on the buy rate for Slamboree range from 0.40 to 0.55 so it's way down from Uncensored. It's another feather in Hogan's cap as far as showing he's the one who pops the big buy rates on PPV. The figure wasn't unexpected for a number of reasons, from the time of the year to the number of PPV events in a nine-day period of time and the fact Lethal Lottery has never done well on PPV in the past.

June 10, 1996

-In the midst of all this controversy came the most catastrophic PPV in the history of the WWF, almost completely due to circumstances beyond the control of the company. A downpour in Florence, SC caused the power outage for more than one hour of a two hour show. When power was restored, Michaels and Smith went on for their PPV grudge match which was nowhere close to the quality everyone expected from the match due to a number of circumstances all related to the power outage... There was almost no interest in the replay showing on 5/28 because there was no main event match. The billed main event match was already seen by everyone who cared as a below par match with a poor finish, certainly nothing worth paying \$19.95 to see again when you could simply call the cable company up and get a refund, particularly since a large percentage of PPV viewers watch in groups and the Sunday group in most cases wouldn't be able to get together again on Tuesday night. Even that situation was chaotic as some companies offered full refunds, and others, such as DirecTV, only would issue \$10 refunds to those who complained, which due to circumstances beyond the control of the WWF, left a lot of people with a bad taste regarding WWF PPV events. The double pin idea was to set up the King of the Ring rematch, and having already done that, the idea apparently was that the double pin result would become obsolete in KOR build-up if there was a subsequent match with a different finish. This led to considerable requests for refunds and mix-ups between wrestling fans and cable companies. While no figures are in at press time,

word almost across the board indicated a buy rate for this show far lower than for any show in either WWF or WCW history.

-In the wake of the Dan Severn vs. Ken Shamrock match, SEG has decided to drop the superfight as part of its UFC PPV shows for at least the remainder of 1996... The plan was to have the superfight title defended in September, but after the disappointing 0.6 buy rate for the 5/17 UFC show (about 140,000 buys and \$1.26 million company gross on the event, figures held down because between Cablevision in the U.S. and Viewers Choice of Canada not carrying the show, nearly ten percent of the PPV universe didn't have the show available), the decision was made to go to a tournament format for at least the time being and concentrate the remainder of this year to putting on three strong tournaments.

June 17, 1996

-The Beware of Dog PPV did about an 0.45 buy rate going in which would be 110,000 buys, although that's not taking into account refunds factored in from the show being screwed-up by the power outage, many of which will be unknown for a while because people will simply complain to the companies when the bills for May come in several weeks. SEG in situations where the conclusion of the main event didn't air in some markets because the show lasted longer than three hours wound up having to refund 10% and 30% of revenue respectively when all was said and done on the two shows. Since this show had three of the five bouts missing (UFC offered complete shows on replays as well and still incurred major give-backs) rather than simply one finish, one has to figure the percentage asking for refunds will be much higher.

-Latest figures have the Slamboree PPV show doing an 0.44 buy rate (108,000 buys; est. \$1.21 million company revenue).

-The first Pancrase event on U.S. PPV aired on 4/13 and did a surprising 0.25 buy rate

July 1, 1996

-Prelim estimates for buy rate for the Great American Bash PPV were in the 0.5 range.

-The second Pancrase PPV got murdered by the game five of the NBA playoffs, as buys were cut more than in half from the first show with just over an 0.1 buy rate and 25,000 total buys (approximately \$110,000 company gross).

July 22, 1996

Latest buy-rate figures we've received are that WCW appears to have done an 0.48 buy rate (120,000 buys; est. \$1.34 million) for the 6/16 Great American Bash, WWF appears to have done an 0.60 (150,000 buys; est. \$2.02 million) for 6/23 King of the Ring and preliminary estimates of the WCW buy rate for the Great American Bash with the Hall & Nash match with all the intrigue have ranged as high as 0.80 but most have pegged it at 0.71 (178,000 buys; \$2.23

million). We have no UFC estimates at press time. One would have to label all three figures as somewhat disappointing in that WCW actually declined over the previous year despite its hot television angle. Even though overall interest in wrestling appears way up, and WCW's television ratings picked up greatly in June with the new angle and WWF's arena business is up (although running so many fewer shows and more loaded shows makes comparisons misleading), the PPVs across the board continue a pretty noticeable decline. That is also somewhat misleading because there are so many more PPV events this year than any previous year so they should flatten out.

July 29, 1996

The buy rate for the 7/12 UFC show fell to an 0.43 figure, which would be about 95,000 homes and an estimated \$853,000 total gross. The figures would be the lowest since the first two UFC shows and represent a significant and consistent decline in buys dating back one year and the loss of the mystical Royce Gracie from a peak of approximately 260,000 homes.

August 5, 1996

Independent estimates for the WWF International Incident PPV were that it did an 0.37 buy rate (92,000 buys; est. \$830,000 company income). WWF internal numbers are estimating an 0.53 buy rate.

August 26, 1996

The World Wrestling Federation is considering adding a weekly Saturday night PPV show according to several sources within the company and an independent trade journal report... The working plan is for a \$9.95 show... Sources within cable have estimated that if WWF were to attempt something of this nature, given little money would likely be budgeted for marketing the weekly shows, that break-even for a bare-bones production (with none of the special effects and production values Titan's PPV and television shows are known for) of this type would be in the neighborhood of 62,000 buys per week. A buy rate figure isn't applicable because if Titan could only clear, let's say 10 million homes, or 20 million homes, it would still need basically the same number of buys as a break-even point. Break-even would be quite a bit less for a taped show, although given the nature of the marketplace, if a show is taped unless it is taped in an empty arena, results would get out almost immediately, particularly since the plan would be for it to be taped at the same site so the audience would largely consist of the same group of regular fans. Traditional WWF PPV shows have never come close to dropping to that level although some recent In Your House shows have fallen to the 110,000 buy level according to Titan sources and to below 100,000 buys according to other figures. If Titan wouldn't be able to clear the show in at least most of the entire PPV universe, which consists of an estimated 25 million homes between cable and dish owners, it's very doubtful it could garner 62,000 buys every week. If the show has the type of production values people would expect from Titan Sports PPV and television shows, it would probably mean a break-even of well over 70,000 buys every Saturday night past midnight with little in the way of childrens viewing and far less multiple household

viewing that the current early evening Sunday PPV events. While one would think based on curiosity, that the first one or two shows in this format would do more than 70,000 buys, it is really questionable whether it could maintain that level. If we look at history, the first In Your House show did an 0.83 buy rate and since that time in about a one year period the buy rates have dropped roughly in half. The idea of doing a weekly series is nothing new. SEG, in its first incarnation, had a weekly Thursday night concert series on PPV that ultimately proved to be unsuccessful.

September 2, 1996

-Preliminary indications from this last week are that the WWF's SummerSlam looks to have done approximately an 0.58 buy rate (approximately 145,000 buys; est. \$1.74 million company revenue). That would be a huge drop from last year's figures of an 0.9 buy rate and \$2.37 million, continuing the string of consistently dropping figures since the beginning of the second quarter from last year when it comes to PPV buy rates for both WWF and WCW.

-SEG's taped Kings of Pancrase PPV on 8/16 did its second straight 0.1 buy rate (25,000 buys; est. \$100,000), this time not going head-to-head with the NBA playoffs. SEG has moved all future Pancrase PPVs to Sunday nights, the next being 11/3, believing it to be the traditional PPV night for pro wrestling fans, which appears to be their primary audience. The UFC's will remain on Friday nights because SEG believes it already has its own tradition as being a Friday night show and of being something people set time aside to see, whereas Pancrase is something that people don't know and figure it's best for sampling to do it on a pro wrestling night on a week where there happens to be no other pro wrestling PPV show.

September 30, 1996

-Preliminary buy rate estimates for UFC 11 are about an 0.45, a slight increase from the July show. Because the universe is lower for UFC than pro wrestling because so many systems particularly in Canada and the Northeast don't carry the event, it means approximately 90,000 buys and \$889,000 in revenue after the split which should be profitable but not overly so.

-Estimates are that Fall Brawl did an 0.65 buy rate which is 162,000 buys and \$2 million in event revenue.

October 7, 1996

WWF officials have been told internally that the Mind Games PPV drew an 0.7 buy rate, which would be a huge success given that the hype for this show took a back seat to trying to hotshot for Monday night television ratings. The figures we received from outside sources claimed an 0.42 buy rate (105,000 buys; \$838,000 company revenue) which would be the lowest of the three PPV shows in October, well behind WCW at 0.65 (WCW officials are claiming an 0.75) and slightly trailing UFC at 0.45.

November 11, 1996

Prelim estimated on Havoc buy rate are between 0.7 and 0.85, which would be an increase over last year and WCW sources are claiming it was double of what WWF did the previous week, although we don't have any WWF figures other than indications it wasn't good. The Extreme PPV the same weekend did like an 0.14.

November 25, 1996

Some notes on the Reality Superfighting PPV on 11/22... You've probably all seen the TV commercials, which were very well done, for this event as they've advertised like crazy on Raw and Nitro the past several weeks. It's the biggest budgeted event, but the reality is that they'll need an 0.7 buy rate just to break even and the reality of the genre is that isn't going to happen.

December 2, 1996

-Preliminary estimates for Survivor Series have ranged between an 0.48 and 0.58 buy rate, which have to be a huge disappointment considering it was Hart's first match back and how well promoted the show was.

-Within the no holds barred world, there was a lot of interest created by the debut of a new promotion on PPV--Martial Arts Reality Superfighting (MARS) and their main event of Renzo Gracie vs. Oleg Taktarov on 11/22 in Birmingham... The lack of fans live seemed to translate on PPV where early reports are the show will do in the range of an 0.08 buy rate, which, if accurate (the show reportedly needed close to an 0.95 buy rate just to break even because of all the money they had spent, particularly on television commercials which ran all over the pro wrestling shows the past few weeks), would be red ink bleeding to the tune of seven figures. In many ways this was reminiscent of the first World Combat Championship show except that show had more exciting fights. There was a lot of press before the show within the martial arts publications that both groups would become the major force in the industry because they spent a lot of money on promotion. WCC ended up being nothing more than a memory after huge losses on its first show when the buy rate was so weak. With the success of UFC on PPV in 1994 and 1995, some promoters feel events of this type--reality fighting--on PPV are a license to print money, but the biggest reality of that type of fighting is just the opposite. This genre doesn't have close to the fan base of pro wrestling, and in pro wrestling there are still to this day only two companies that have proven they can do business on PPV. The group scheduled its second PPV on 3/28, and we'll see if they keep that date.

December 9, 1996

Early estimates are that World War III did about an 0.5 buy rate, which would be along the same lines as what Survivor Series did.

December 16, 1996

WWF is claiming an 0.8 buy rate for Survivor Series, which is well above the early estimates we'd heard. We've heard independent source estimates vary from 0.48 to 0.65 and most independent accounts place the figure at roughly the same as what WCW did for World War III

December 23, 1996

-The UFC Ultimate Ultimate buy rate appears to be around an 0.5, which is something of a disappointment, although it is slightly up from the previous two shows.

December 30, 1996

It appears that style has taken its toll on ECW's future growth as Request Television officially announced this past week cancellation of the scheduled PPV in the spring. Request President Hugh Pinero said the company would be breaking its contract with ECW after confirming a series of events that he was unaware of beforehand and that the company was uneasy about... The decision by Request, which covers the vast majority of addressable PPV households, was made on 12/20, and apparently there were discussions all weekend with ECW desperately trying to keep its date. Pinero said on 12/23 that Request had decided to send ECW a letter saying it was going to cancel its contract for either the 3/30 or 4/13 dates that ECW was talking about doing, exercising its escape clause in the contract. Viewers Choice had earlier decided independently against carrying ECW on PPV, which had cut several million homes out of its potential PPV universe, largely due to having qualms about a few of the angles and storylines, and in particular the usage of Tyler Fullington and the characterization of his mother Lori. This leaves ECW only with Action TV as a potential carrier if it wishes to go on PPV, which would mean roughly 70% of the PPV universe wouldn't be carrying the show and make doing a live event almost certainly not financially feasible as break even would be an 0.5 level buy rate, a figure that one would think would be well out of reach for the company. Paul Heyman said that doing a PPV through Action TV was not one of his back-up options for the major first quarter of the year show provided Request doesn't carry the event. Paul Heyman said on 12/23 that there was no chance Viewers Choice would carry the first event but still held out hope it might carry a second event down the line

January 6, 1997

After a week of negotiations back-and-forth, it appears likely, or at least somewhat likely, that ECW will debut on PPV after all in 1997, perhaps as early as 4/13. ECW's Paul Heyman said he was "cautiously optimistic" the deal could be put back together after several conference calls between Steve Karel of ECW and top executives from Request TV including President Hugh Panero over the past week. The deal appeared to have fallen apart when Panero decided to cancel the ECW date on 12/20, largely over reservations about several occurrences within the promotion, in specific the fire incident in late 1995 and the 11/23 incident in Revere, MA where an underage untrained wrestler received a horrific beating and a blade wound the likes of which even some of the most hardened and callous people seeing the tape ended up being revolted

by. The first PPV show would have been either 3/30 or more likely 4/13. Panero stated on 12/30 that the two sides are in the process of talking and that the Christmas holiday slowed up the negotiations because so many people were out of the office. He said he was a little bit confused about the incident in Revere, MA because nobody had informed him of it until just over one week ago. At that point Request had approved the ECW date thinking they were just another pro wrestling promotion like the WWF or WCW, but after recognizing they are a more violent form of the genre, they had to learn what they do and insure that the company take greater safeguards against injuries as they move from a regional operation to getting national exposure. He said that he doesn't consider ECW banned from PPV but is a little concerned how a 17-year-old kid with no training got into the ring and was cut up in the manner which he was. "As the new kid on the block they have to demonstrate they (ECW) are up to the same level of professionalism as WWF and WCW," Panero said. "My people thought they were like WWF and WCW and when we found out differently, we started to do more research. I have no intention of banning them." Panero said that no date was on the books as of press time but if the two sides can reach agreements on the items of concern, they could still get their date in either late March or April. Heyman stated that because of the problems, he's given up the idea of 3/30, but is still hoping to put everything together by the end of the week and be a go for 4/13. Request services about 18 million addressable households in the United States. The other major PPV carrier, Viewers Choice, which would be the sole carrier in about seven or eight million of the PPV homes along with a branch that covers most of Canada, had decided against carrying the show because of the content of the ECW television show, in particular the usage of Tyler Fullington (Sandman's son) in a wrestling angle. Even if the show goes on as planned, the loss of VC would cut out about 30% of pure profit from the show's potential. A good showing in the debut show on Request from a buy rate standpoint would probably influence Viewers Choice to carry the second show, but there is no guarantee. Both Request and Viewers Choice in the United States carry other controversial events such as UFC, although Viewers Choice-Canada does not carry any NHB events and several cable systems in the United States, Cablevision Inc. being the most prominent, no longer carry any NHB events even though UFC is behind the major boxing and WWF and WCW events as the most profitable regular entity currently on PPV. NHB events not being carried in some cities are the result of both political and religious pressure on the cable system, which, unless ECW does a repeat of the crucifix angle which they obviously aren't going to do, doesn't figure to be a problem for ECW unless the company garners substantial national media attention. By that point the company would almost have to be incredibly successful before those types of problems would even raise their head. The compromises being worked on have to do with ECW putting regulations and safeguards in place that would keep Request out of a major scandal and avoid a repeat of incidents such as the fire incident or the Revere, MA incident. Panero said he wasn't against blood being used on the show as long as the show is appropriately labeled with a warning at the beginning of the show that there may be graphic violence, and that the blood isn't overdone. Heyman said that they had agreed that no stabbing or puncture type of movements with sharp objects would be used on the show such as an Abdullah the Butcher type gimmick. He said that Request wanted the names and ID's of all participants in such a show ahead of time to make sure they are of age and that he has no problem with it because he wants every participant in the show to be under contract before the show before advertising them. Request wanted to be informed of any "last

minute surprise" participants beforehand and Heyman said considered all of Request's concerns to not be unreasonable. Among them was Request also demanding medical personnel be on hand as it is in boxing and NHB events, which he said the company already does on its own. Heyman said the show itself would contain a lot of wrestling and wouldn't be a bloodfest. There will be no gimmick matches with blood connotations, at least as he has the show planned, such as cage matches, barbed wire matches, chain matches or dog collar matches. He said the show would culminate many feuds and would be the ECW product as it is today with no watering down.

January 13, 1997

Early reports regarding the buy rate for Starrcade are between 0.9 and 1.0, which would be the biggest buy rate for a WCW PPV since the Hogan-Flair retirement match, and because of the higher price tag, it is believed to be the biggest money non-WWF wrestling PPV show in history.

January 27, 1997

Request TV has confirmed the live ECW PPV show for 4/13 from the ECW Arena from 9 p.m. to 11:55 p.m. Eastern time. No second PPV date has been confirmed as of yet. Apparently the deal was pretty well finalized on 1/17 with contracts signed on 1/20...The suggested price of the event is \$19.95 with a \$24.95 price tag the day of the event, although the price is really up to the local cable companies

February 3, 1997

The buy rate for Royal Rumble has been the source of some controversy. WWF is claiming an 0.8 buy rate, which they are saying is a 20% drop from last year (although last year they had claimed a 1.2). Others have pegged it at 0.6, which is far more sizeable decline. Every 0.1 is about \$325,000 difference in pure profit for the company so even a 20% decline represents \$650,000 less in show income as compared with the previous year.

February 17, 1997

NWO Souled Out did an estimated 0.47 buy rate (117,000 buys; \$1.31 million) which was basically half of what Starrcade did so it was a huge flop by that standard as well. This can be attributed perhaps to the idea that fans don't want to pay \$27.95 to see what they believe to be screw-jobs. And after that Robin Hood fiasco, horrible match, horrible ending, it didn't help that the PPV had a Hogan-Giant main event. Bottom line is that NWO is really over to the most serious fans who buy ringside tickets and merchandise but its appeal to the casual masses isn't nearly what people thought.

February 24, 1997

Multi Channel News ran another story about ECW and its first PPV date. The story had a quote from a Viewers Choice spokesperson who said that company would be willing to carry the second ECW PPV show provided the things they had problems with were rectified. Since the angle they had the problem with (Sandman's son being under Raven's spell) has largely been downplayed or dropped, you can read that statement as to actually mean they'll carry it if there is a decent buy rate on the first show. There was also a note that some of the Request systems owned by Intermedia Cable including Nashville, TN won't be carrying the show. A spokesperson for that company said he saw ECW and said it was worse than Extreme Fighting and even though they carry Request programming, they won't carry that. Time Warner Cable in Manhattan, which doesn't carry Request, is expected to carry the ECW show as a stand-alone based on ECW fans asking for it.

March 3, 1997

Buy rate for the 2/7 UFC show looks to be in the 0.4 to 0.5 range, which is lower than the original projections and that coupled with the \$500,000 hit they took from moving at the last minute is yet another piece of bad news.

March 10, 1997

-Preliminary estimates on the buy rate for SuperBrawl are 0.75 which would be about a \$2.18 million company gross.

-WWF figures claim an 0.61 buy rate and \$1.27 million gross for the Final Four PPV.

March 17, 1997

-*AWA/World Class/Memphis (1988) held SuperClash III from the UIC Pavilion in Chicago headlined by a so-called world title unification match with Jerry Lawler vs. Kerry Von Erich. Although generally remembered as a flop, the show was overall decent with a good main event. The buy rate was 0.5, which would be a huge success today, but in those days was considered a flop as it amounted to about 40,000 buys which would be break-even.

-The AAA "When Worlds Collide" PPV show in late 1994, co-promoted by WCW, did an 0.24 buy rate, or about 44,000 buys, which was about break-even. Since AAA didn't have the negative of Viewers Choice not carrying the event and it not airing in Canada, it was available in far more homes than ECW.

March 24, 1997

Early reports are that Uncensored did a better buy rate than SuperBrawl.

April 7, 1997

-Preliminary reports are that Wrestlemania did an 0.77 buy rate (an estimated \$2.40 million company gross), which can't be spun as anything other than a disaster. Last year's Mania, for comparison purposes, did a 1.2, and that figure was the lowest for any Mania show in history (previous low was the 1.5 in 1995). The low number wasn't unexpected at Titan, as the early predictions were in the .75 to .95 range, but it was within the cable industry that sees Mania as one of the biggest cash bonanzas every year. It was not well promoted until the final week before the show, and having a PPV every weekend for six straight weeks did make the show just another Sunday afternoon wrestling PPV rather than the show of the year. The Mania buy rate is actually lower than what several WCW PPV shows have done over the past few months. The WCW Uncensored show one week earlier did between an 0.7 and 0.9, depending upon who you talk with, so the numbers for the two shows were close.

-Plagued by economic problems--the inability to make the group popular enough to turn a profit, combined with political problems of more and more cable systems deciding to no longer carry NHB shows, the odds are great the final chapter of Extreme Fighting in this form was played out on 3/28 in Des Moines, IA before a sparse crowd of only 750 fans in the 11,000-seat Veterans Memorial Auditorium. **More importantly, the buy rate for the show based on preliminary estimates was in the range of 0.12 for an estimated \$172,000 company gross, and since putting on even a bare-bones show is going to cost \$300,000-\$400,000, you can see the turnaround in buy rate needed to save the promotion didn't come close.**

April 14, 1997

WCW sources are claiming an 0.9 buy rate for Uncensored and a solid victory over Wrestlemania's 0.77 the next week. One year ago, who would have thought that was possible?

April 21, 1997

-Very preliminary Barely Legal buy rates estimates at press time with less than 10 percent of the systems reporting were in the 0.2 range, or probably about 26,000 buys and an estimated total company revenue of \$210,000 (break even was between \$350,000 and \$400,000) which, due to the limited number of homes available because so many major systems refused to carry the show, would be a money loser as a show itself. ECW had to guarantee Request a certain number of buys to get them to carry the show. Paul Heyman was expecting that going in and was majorly down playing the show's chances of being a money maker and claiming it was more as a way to put on a show with a product content that would get those who didn't carry the first show into changing their position for the future. Some of the losses could be offset in the future by eventual videotape sales and from the live gate. As a first show, it appeared to do from a buy rate standpoint (which is a fair comparison, total homes wouldn't be) if the early figures are a national indication, well below the debuts of such groups as UWFI, Pancrase and EFC, none of which succeeded on PPV. It would be slightly less than AAA, which also never got a second show but that was more due to disorganization than anything else. However, all the aforementioned groups that are no longer around saw buy rates decline significantly after the first show, which is the general pattern for most events on PPV. UFC, which debuted in 1993

with 80,000 buys, pro boxing and major league pro wrestling are the notable exceptions although all three have suffered consistent gradual declines as a pattern in recent years. There is a good chance ECW would fall into the category of exceptions, and if the second show on 8/17 were able to clear the vast majority of the cable universe and maintain an 0.2, it would break even or show a small profit to the point it could stay in the game. Meetings with Cablevision and Viewers Choice, both of which didn't carry this show, are expected soon. A decline in buy rate on a second show would make it difficult to continue on PPV. But keep in mind any figures this early are preliminary at best.

-In news that has been expected ever since the buy rate for the 3/28 EFC PPV show came in so low, Battlecade officially announced on 4/14 that it was folding operations. "Battlecade is kaput, it is out of business as of today," said Donald Zuckerman, the co-owner of the company, in an interview with Vale Tudo News. Whatever hope there was of raising capital after Penthouse pulled out due to the last three shows all being money losers and it was known in advance that if the 3/28 show failed to make a profit, it was history, ended when Request TV officially announced it wouldn't carry the proposed 7/11 return date. Request made the decision to not carry EFC, because with TCI and so many other major cable distributors including most recently Jones Cable, deciding not to carry future NHB shows, coupled with the weak buy rate, Request felt it wasn't worth it. The decision wasn't made based on Request backing off the genre as much as systems that weren't carrying it and a lack of buy rate. Request carried a commercial for the 5/30 UFC PPV over the weekend, placing it right at the conclusion of the ECW show, so it isn't pulling out of UFC. Zuckerman claimed the last show had 45,000 buys and that you couldn't run a profitable PPV show on 45,000 buys, although insiders claim the real figure was 19,000 buys making it a major loser.

April 28, 1997

-The 4/13 ECW Barely Legal PPV show, besides getting a great response as a show, appears to have done better from a buy rate standpoint than the initial indications last week. Request TV sent out a press release claiming the show would do between 50,000 and 60,000 buys in a 17 million home universe which would be a buy rate of between 0.29 and 0.35. Multi Channel News estimated the buy rate to be 0.26 and 45,000 buys, and other industry sources also estimate the buy rate at between 0.24 and 0.27 but believe the 17 million universe figure is highly inflated and the realistic number of buys as closer to 40,000. I'm skeptical of a 17 million home universe carrying the show as well, since there is a basic rule of thumb within the industry to exaggerate that figure. Recent WWF and WCW PPV shows have had a universe of 26.2 million homes, and if you take away Canada (4 million homes), Cablevision (3 million), and half the satellite dish homes that didn't carry ECW (2 million), that already cuts it down to 17 million. That isn't even taking away the Viewers Choice homes which have to run into several million. Others who do PPV shows regularly claim that the total Request homes are more like 11 million, and if you add to that two million satellite homes and perhaps another million homes that carried the show on a stand-alone basis, that's only a 14 million total and that's not taking into consideration that a lot of the Cablevision homes and Request homes are the same and those homes weren't able to purchase the show. The general rule within the PPV world is that the figures most companies

claim publicly for their shows, not just within the pro wrestling world, are inflated by 20 percent. For example, the Oscar de la Hoya vs. Pernell Whitaker fight on 4/12 that was publicly claimed to have 1,000,000 buys really had closer to 800,000. Paul Heyman said that when he first received the press release, he thought the numbers listed were exaggerated but says he now has been led to believe the show will end up doing in excess of 50,000 buys and at that figure would be a profitable show doing a gross in excess of \$400,000. Heyman estimated his expenses on the show at \$320,000 to \$330,000, so a break-even number would be approximately 40,000 buys. Heyman said the only concession to get Request to carry the show was to guarantee them their share of the money the show would generate on an 0.2 buy rate, which is now a moot point. Because of it being a new player in the marketplace, there was more interest in tracking an accurate buy rate on this show throughout the industry than any show in a long time. In addition, ECW skews considerably higher to insiders (to nobody's surprise) as we received a greater number of responses to the ECW show than to most recent WWF and WCW shows, although the number of responses wasn't as many as the first show of either AAA or UWFI. Whatever the real figure is, and really all the estimates are all fairly close, the show did along with lines of what many groups have done for their debut show so to tab the buy rate as anything like a major shock would be overstating things, especially considering that most industry estimates going in were in the 0.2 to 0.3 range. The show did about the same buy rate, perhaps a tad lower, than the debut of both Extreme Fighting and Pancrase, a little higher than the debut and only show of AAA, significantly lower than the debut of UWFI and UFC, and well above the debut shows of Martial Arts Reality Superfighting and World Combat Championships, let alone the basically forgotten debuts of the Continental Wrestling Federation, Herb Abrams UWF, LPWA and World Fighting Federation. Of those groups, ECW, Abrams, LPWA and AAA were the only ones with any weekly television exposure. ECW is the only one that based its television for weeks around professionally building the PPV as the biggest event in the history of the company. Only one of those groups actually succeeded in PPV to the point it was consistently profitable, which was UFC. It's hard to compare different types of shows, but based on the response we've received, it appears the debut of ECW was better received than most of the above mentioned groups. The buy rate was certainly strong enough that Viewers Choice would have no economic reason not to carry the proposed second show on 8/17, which ironically is going to be subject to enormous confusion in the marketplace because the already resurrected Extreme Fighting Championships are scheduled for 8/15. Adding those homes and maintaining a buy rate of better than 0.25 would keep the group consistently profitable in the PPV game. And while most groups decline significantly from the first show to the second, (UFC being an exception) ECW did make the most out of its first opportunity unlike other groups that debuted by throwing a subpar show out there without any long-term purpose or direction to build it to a next show. Overall, by almost any standard, as a first show, it would have to be considered a success.

-Just two days after an official announcement of its folding, the Extreme Fighting Championships claim to be back in business with an 8/15 PPV show scheduled to take place in Davenport, IA. Reports are that promoter Donald Zuckerman has found a new, unnamed investor, and has moved the operations out of General Media (Penthouse) in New York, which liquidated the company after a third successive money losing PPV outing on 3/28, to Los

Angeles. However, the future of the group looks no more promising. There is the domino effect of cable systems choosing not to carry that type of show that appears is only going to get worse before it gets better, coupled with Request not carrying the 8/15 show or any future shows due to the 3/28 show doing only an estimated 0.12 buy rate. Without Request, even coming off a very well received show, whatever slim hope the group has of making a profit on a PPV is out the window

May 26, 1997

SEG is still working on doing a follow-up show on 7/27, rumored to be in Mobile, AL after the attempts to run a show in Japan on that date fell through. After doing the math, SEG feels the show will still be available in 17 million homes because at present, Viewers Choice is the carrier of choice in 61 percent of the PPV universe in the United States. With scaling back costs, it is still enough homes to make the show potentially viable if the buy rate is decent... David Isaacs, who heads the UFC division for SEG, said that the letter sent by National Cable Television Association President Decker Anstrom two weeks ago urging all the cable operators to pull out of carrying NHB events was a potent factor in the dominos falling, far more than he realized at the time the letter went out. "Our buy rates have been good, but not great, but the others (EFC, MARS) have been crappy," Isaacs said. "These changes have made it so the other events aren't going to be able to continue. By getting rid of the other events, the buy rates for the entire genre are going to start looking better."

June 2, 1997

As far as PPVs are concerned, the Spring Stampede show in April did about an 0.58 buy rate and Slamboree is expected to do about an 0.60. This is basically about the same range as WWF's last two In Your House shows that have been between 0.50 and 0.60. No matter what anyone says, WCW's buy rates drop significantly when Hogan isn't on the show, even for a show which included the return of Ric Flair and had Roddy Piper, Nash, Hall and the football players. For PPV revenue, even though buys are pretty much the same of late, WCW takes in significantly more money since it's last two shows were priced at \$27.95 to WWF's \$19.95. For the May shows, the WWF Cold Day in Hell did about 159,000 buys and \$1.27 million while the WCW Slamboree did about 165,000 buys and \$1.88 million.

June 23, 1997

-Prelim estimates are King of the Ring did an 0.46 buy rate which would be about 129,000 buys and \$1.54 million which would be well down from last year.

-It appears the 5/30 UFC did about an 0.4 buy rate, which is along the lines of what all the shows have been doing since last September, although with a much smaller total universe than ever due to TCI pulling out. That would be approximately 80,000 buys and a \$702,000 gross. UFC claims the 7/27 show, which will also have Request pulling out, will be available in 17

million homes but other sources figure with all the pull-outs that the number could be quite a bit lower.

June 30 ,1997

WWF claims preliminary King of the Ring figures as an 0.50 buy rate and between 130,000 and 135,000 buys which would be about a \$1.59 million gross.

July 21, 1997

Preliminary indications according to WWF internal memos are that the Canadian Stampede PPV show did an 0.59 buy rate and 165,000 buys which would be a \$1.32 million company gross. Those figures were significantly higher than predicted and one would think the show did great business in Canada where everyone underestimated the drawing power of Canada vs. USA which skewed the overall average up.

July 28, 1997

The WWF's decision to drop the two-hour In Your House concept of a reduced price PPV comes on the heels of WCW successfully running monthly nearly three hour long PPV shows this year at \$27.95 and not showing any effects of the price tag cutting down on buys. Both groups for average shows seem to hover between an 0.5 and 0.65 buy rate, but WCW this year is substantially ahead in PPV revenue because of charging the higher price on every show. Now it will be back to WWF charging the higher price, as it had been up until the past year. To keep Wrestlemania in its position as a special event, that show will be priced at \$34.95. The 1995 Wrestlemania, which was something of a major disappointment, was priced at \$34.95 and there were many who blamed the price tag as the reason the show didn't come close to early projections. Obviously the WWF believed it as well as it cut the Mania price back to \$29.95 the past two years. However, there is every economic indication this year that the wrestling audience is far more willing to spend more money to see what they perceive as a premium event, and all forms of entertainment are charging more for tickets than a few years ago.

August 4, 1997

-WCW is claiming a 1.0 buy rate for Bash at the Beach, which by the standards of the day should be considered a success overall, but not an overwhelming one. When WWF did a 1.5 two years ago for the Lawrence Taylor Wrestlemania, and that's with a \$34.95 price tag, it was considered a failure so standards keep going downward. Independent sources dispute those figures and place the buy rate at 0.78 which would be a \$2.75 million company gross. By no means could the latter figure be considered a success considering how much Hogan and Rodman were making for the show.

-Perhaps the most interesting note when it comes to the UFC 14 buy rate is that numerous Time-Warner systems around the country actually did carry the event after saying that they

wouldn't. There were at least a few systems that we are aware of that reversed their positions in the past week due to numerous complaints from subscribers. That also means in those systems the event was never advertised and thus the buy rate was likely microscopic with no advance pub in those systems that an event was even taking place. In other words it was likely to get almost an 0.0 buy rate which will kill the national average. That may end up making it easier for the cable industry to finish serving up UFC as it sacrificial lamb, or more likely was one of those strange lack of communications in a big business that those of us who follow pro wrestling are familiar with. Promoter David Isaacs acknowledged the numbers weren't going to be impressive, but that they were thrilled with the main event and were now beginning plans for a follow-up show.

August 11, 1997

Early reports indicate UFC XIV doing an 0.52 buy rate which translates with the small universe of just under 15 million homes to about 75,000 buys and a \$660,000 company gross. The buy rate itself was up from the previous two shows which is a good sign, but with the universe constricting so much due to Request not carrying the show, the actual number of buys was the lowest number ever. Even with all the cost slashing, that's probably still a money loser.

August 18, 1997

-The very preliminary Road Wild buy rate estimate coming from Request is 0.77 (the very preliminary numbers are always higher than they turn out because the people who report back the quickest are the ones who are the happiest), which has to be considered good. This would be roughly the same as the preliminary figures for SummerSlam at an 0.79 buy rate.

-Some good news and bad news for UFC in an article in this week's Multi Channel News. The article said that the 7/27 show did 10 to 20 percent better than the May show, as reported here last week. The article had Bob Meyrowitz note that even with the increase in buy rate, the show lost money because it was carried in so few homes. The bad news is that Viewers Choice, which doesn't carry ECW either, is having second thoughts about carrying UFC. VC hasn't committed to carrying the planned 10/17 show, which would certainly if they don't carry it spell the end of that show and ultimately UFC itself. The article quotes a VC spokesperson as saying they haven't made a decision one way or another on the 10/17 show.

-Paul Heyman before the first PPV show said that the show wasn't about drawing a good buy rate, but about putting on the kind of the show which would increase the universe for subsequent shows. By that standard, even though the first show did an acceptable and profitable buy rate and had to be considered a success from a product standpoint, it didn't accomplish its objectives because for the most part the people who passed on show No. 1, are still on the pass list although there are negotiations ongoing that could change that for the third show. The 7/27 UFC show, at less than 15 million homes, was carried by the larger servicing Viewers Choice and not Request, (ECW is being carried by Request and not Viewers Choice), and had all the satellite services cleared while ECW has most but not all. Most companies that

decided against carrying UFC also aren't carrying ECW (TCI being the most notable exception as they are carrying ECW in their systems that subscribe to Request).

August 25, 1997

Very early estimates indicate the 2nd ECW PPV did between an 0.20 and 0.23 buy rate, or about 35,000 buys, which would be an estimated 13 to 20 percent drop from the first show but would also make a profit crudely estimated by those who really don't know the costs of around \$90,000. For a second show, it held up far better than Pancrase, EFC or UWFI but didn't show the growth momentum of UFC at the same stage (UFC went from about 80,000 buys to 100,000 buys in a significantly larger universe from show one to show two).

September 1, 1997

Here are some more estimates on the Hardcore Heaven buy rate. Request TV is releasing an 0.25 buy rate which would be about 42,000 buys, down 15 to 25 percent of what they released as a figure for the first ECW show. Other estimates are pegging the figure at between an 0.18 and 0.21 buy rate, or 30,000 to 35,000 buys which is believed to be also 15 to 25 percent down from the first show. In comparison with the other recent PPV shows in late July and August, the WCW Road Wild looks to be between an 0.65 and 0.70, WWF SummerSlam at between 0.75 and 0.80 and UFC at about 0.53. We do know that Paul Heyman promised Request the lighting would be much better on the next show. Heyman's reaction has been uncharacteristic, particularly since a lot of his core audience did like the show, because he's openly stated it was a bad PPV show, went on the house mic at his TV taping in Queens (which won't air on television) and said he thought the show sucked but that the next one would be better, and on his television show made jokes about how bad the lighting was on the show. When WWF and WCW have done shows that were far worse received, they've gone on television and tried to spread the illusion it was still "the greatest SummerSlam in history."

October 6, 1997

-WWF Ground Zero on 9/7 at 0.45 which would be 130,000 buys and with the price increase would be \$1.67 million which is a big increase on what the In Your House series used to gross with the lower price tag even though total buys were down.

-WCW's Fall Brawl on 9/14 did an 0.53 buy rate or about 150,000 buys and \$1.83 million which is way down from what they've been doing most of the year on PPV and you can draw your own conclusions as to why. Mine is that they didn't let anyone know what the card was until the day before the show and they've done so many mystery main events and people have felt ripped off afterwards that they aren't buying shows based on a surprise. A lot of fans, like close to half the regular audience, no longer watch the weekend television and stick only to Monday so by not having the card finalized by the Monday prior to the PPV, they hurt themselves in the pocket book.

October 27, 1997

After a disastrous first PPV show, it was made official on 10/20 that the International Wrestling Forum promotion has folded. The 10/11 show, which was not well received, also drew one of the lowest buy rates in the history of any live event, doing an 0.03 buy rate or around 9,000 buys nationwide. This coincides with the live event looking disastrous with 200 to 250 fans in the building. Break-even for a live event of this type would be in the 30,000 range. The Extreme Fighting Championships, run by the same John Perretti who organized IWF and fell victim to both red ink from money-losing PPV shows as well as tremendous political opposition, debuted at 60,000 buys and most of its follow-up shows were in the 30,000 to 40,000 range when it came to total buys.

November 3, 1997

-Very preliminary Halloween Havoc buy rate estimates are almost through the roof with very serious belief that this show could be the best buy rate of the year, which is saying something because it went in with nowhere near the media publicity of the Rodman show and didn't involve any non-wrestling talent, which again shows that to the general public, putting Hogan and Piper in a cage because of their name value, despite them both being washed up in the ring, still means more than anything else, just as putting Hogan and Flair together again in a program will still mean big business.

November 10, 1997

-The Hogan vs. Piper cage match from Halloween Havoc drew a company record for buys and gross revenue on PPV, an estimated 300,000 buys (1.1 buy rate) and \$3.52 million. For all the complaints about how bad the "Age in the cage" match was (and it surely was that bad), the job of those on top is to sell tickets and Hogan is still the man in this business.

-The WWF's One Night Only PPV from all accounts did a disappointing buy rate. Sky Channel would only say the figure was "not as high as we had hoped." To make matters worse, Telewest Cable, the largest cable system in the UK didn't carry the event so it was primarily available only to dish owners.

-Diamond Dallas Page on Nitro said he was in one of the two main events of the biggest drawing PPV in wrestling history on Nitro, although every Wrestlemania from 1987-1996 did in excess of 300,000 buys as did many other WWF PPVs during that time period, and that's with a much smaller total universe of homes. WCW has had numerous shows draw a larger buy rate in the past, but not more buys because PPV is in more homes now than during the 80s peak period in wrestling. Not to downplay these numbers, because they are bigger numbers than Hogan drew with the likes of Vader and in the retirement match with Flair, and with all the mainstream hype earlier this year for Dennis Rodman.

November 24, 1997

According to WWF sources, the Survivor Series is projected to do 250,000 buys, which would be an 0.89 buy rate--the best the company would have done since the Hart-Michaels match at the 1996 Wrestlemania. Other U.S. sources weren't as positive in their projections, as Request and Viewers Choice early returns projected an 0.55 buy rate, which would be absolutely miserable if true. The difference could be Canada, which would be really scary for the WWF if that was the case. A buy rate through the roof in Canada, where the stories of Hart leaving made mainstream press the entire last week, and where the national angle and Michaels picking his nose with the flag should have fueled the patriotic fervor, which would be logically expected, could explain the difference. Most WWF PPV events usually do better in Canada than the U.S. even without an angle geared toward the Canadian market as this match clearly was, and one of the reasons for the big drop in UFC buy rates was when they lost Canada.

December 15, 1997

-Preliminary estimates on the buy rate for the November to Remember PPV were between a 0.19 and 0.20, or about 45,000 buys with the larger universe which would be about a \$400,000 company gross. The buy rate basically held from the second show with the number of buys increasing because of the larger universe, after a small drop from the first show to the second show. ECW has basically established its level on PPV as a regular 0.2 deal, which is enough to be profitable provided they don't have a shrinking universe problem ala UFC. There had been stories within the industry about ECW needing to establish its level at 0.3 or some companies would feel it wasn't worth its while because of how many wrestling PPV shows are already being offered, so that could also be a roadblock in 1998. Left to its own devices from a purely economic situation, the company should be able to run profitable PPV shows, although nowhere near at the level of being competition for WWF, WCW or even UFC (although it's profit margin is certainly higher than UFC because the cost of doing a show is so much lower).

-The first Pride One Event, on 10/9 at the Tokyo Dome, was the first PPV event ever in Japan and drew an 8.0 buy rate, although with the limited universe that is actually 12,000 buys out of a universe of only 150,000 homes. Even so, that was considered a phenomenal success even though the number of homes makes it likely not profitable nor was profit ever considered any kind of realistic proposition from the PPV at this stage of the game. The buy rate does show the potential in Japan for NHB (and even more so pro wrestling) when PPV technology reaches the U.S. level. Even with the Japanese debut of Royce Gracie, the second event is not going to be put on PPV.

December 22, 1997

Preliminary estimates of the buy rate for D-Generation X have hovered between 0.39 and 0.50, which is roughly the same or slightly ahead when it comes to number of buys (and with a \$10 higher price tag so taking in tons more money) than the December show last year, but down significantly as in 40 to 55% from the November show.

January 5, 1998

It is too early to get any kind of a realistic estimate on Starrcade the buy rate. WCW sources were predicting ahead of time 500,000 buys, which would be about a 1.7 which would be the most buys for any PPV show in this industry dating back to the heyday of the WWF on PPV around seven years ago. WCW's all-time record was probably around 310,000 buys for the Hogan-Piper Halloween Havoc cage match. Due to the holidays, even preliminary estimates are sketchy at best but the early numbers are looking to be in the 1.55 range which would be around 435,000 buys.

January 19, 1998

Multi-Channel News did an article on Starrcade breaking the all-time WCW PPV record and being the most successful PPV wrestling show in six years for either group. The story had Turner sources estimating 600,000 to 625,000 buys, but they also claimed 500,000 for Havoc which is about a 33% exaggeration of the realistic 350,000 figure. The story itself, and Multi-Channel News is considered a reliable industry source when it comes to buy rates, claimed a 1.9 buy rate and said it was almost double the previous bests over the past few years by WCW. Request TV claimed a national 1.8 buy rate for the show. A 1.9 would translate to 530,000-580,000 buys and a \$6.52 million gross, making it the third biggest PPV event of the year trailing only Tyson-Holyfield and De la Hoya-Whitaker and ending up slightly ahead of Holyfield-Moorer which was considered in the industry as a disappointment. It would also make it the biggest money pro wrestling anywhere of the year as throwing in the live gate and merchandise the figures would top \$7 million, which is more than New Japan would have taken in at the 1/4 Tokyo Dome show

January 26, 1998

-...Simply put, if Tyson's \$4 million figure is accurate, the WWF needs 648,000 buys out of Wrestlemania (2.2 buy rate) to make out financially and if the real figure is \$6 million it would need about 807,000 buys (2.7 buy rate). These are not figures to break even, but figures to make out based on Tyson adding the revenue offsetting his cost, actual break even would be lower.

February 2, 1998

-As to what Tyson has meant thus far, the 1/18 Royal Rumble in San Jose from all accounts drew the largest PPV buy rate for a WWF show since the 1996 Wrestlemania. Sources within the WWF are predicting in excess of 300,000 buys, or about a 1.03 buy rate. Independent sources are claiming the number at 0.92, which would be a slight increase from the 1997 high water mark of the famous Bret Hart-Shawn Michaels Montreal match (0.89) and well ahead of the estimated 0.7 for last year's Rumble. Of course, business overall is much hotter this year than at the same time last year, and the figure appears to be in line with what the 1996 Rumble did (between 1.0 and 1.1). One can figure the curiosity over Tyson being there probably resulted

in 50,000 to 70,000 additional buys or worth around \$750,000 to the WWF just on the Rumble alone out of curiosity for the hype of him simply being there in an unspecified role and teasing with the 1995 Lawrence Taylor footage that he'd be in a "surprise" angle, which turned out to be just watching the show from the luxury boxes and not doing an angle. And even though Tyson was booed heavily by the live crowd, the rehabilitation of his animalistic image of being a rapist and an ear biter started as he came off as just a good-natured exuberant pro wrestling fan rooting for his favorite "Cold Stoned."

-The 12/21 UFC PPV appears to have done about an 0.4 buy rate, which would be about 65,000 buys and a \$697,000 gross. The buy rate is down a little from the previous shows. Even though UFC is still doing about double what ECW is doing on buy rate, with ECW's universe being almost clearing everyone and UFC not making any ground in turning companies around, I'd suspect ECW will be doing actual PPV numbers pretty much identical to UFC by the next show and that's with a lot smaller overhead

February 9, 1998

WCW is claiming about a 1.1 buy rate for Souled Out, while non-company sources have it pegged at 0.95. Either way it would be the biggest money show in company history that didn't involve Hogan and apparently be about the same or even slightly ahead of Rumble

March 2, 1998

-Preliminary indications on the 2/15 No Way out of Texas PPV are a .52 buy rate, which, with the increase in price from \$19.95 to \$29.95, would be another huge revenue increase over the same show last year

-Most of the questions regarding ECW on PPV have been answered as the previous two shows have established the buy rate level at about 0.2. Living Dangerously appears to have less hype than the previous shows, but it is also the first show airing on Time Warner Cable in New York City, which is one of the promotions strongest markets, so realistically if anything that 0.2 figure should be a minimum this show should do and probably will do slightly better than that. A real big test was the third show, because it followed up a weak second show but the buy rate basically held steady. In addition, all wrestling is noticeably hotter than even a few months ago which should also lead to an improvement in the buy rate. The promotion can maintain PPV presence forever at that level with its total universe being approximately 23-25 million homes, with realistically only Cablevision, which is strong in New England, as the lone major conglomerate that hasn't agreed to carry the show. Some Viewers Choice systems will also not be carrying the show because it's on a secondary "Hot Choice" channel as opposed to Viewers Choice One, which isn't available in a few million regular VC homes. It is believed the 5/3 PPV will move to VC-1, and negotiations are going on with Cablevision as well for the follow-up show, which would mean the show would be available just about everywhere WWF and WCW are (we're not certain of the Canadian market). The other internal question is whether ECW can, as it promised from its inception on PPV, deliver a stronger product than WWF or WCW. It

delivered, or at least came close to delivering on that promise on the first show, which was certainly among the best PPV shows on 1997. Clearly that promise wasn't delivered on the follow up two shows. There is also some question regarding the live gate in Asbury Park. As late as press time, with the top ticket price at \$100, there were still second row tickets left unsold.

-The 4/4 card in Manchester, England is officially not going to be an England-only PPV. Apparently the "One Night Only" show did a disappointing buy rate combined with the fact that much if not the majority of PPV households weren't cleared for the show due to a contract problem. With that problem not having been alleviated, the plan for this as a PPV was dropped although at some point they do plan on doing England-only PPV shows. The American PPV shows are by contract free television specials on Sky

March 9, 1998

Promo Azteca, WCW and Telemundo have meetings next week with the proposed idea for WCW to syndicate a two-hour weekly Azteca television show, and once its established, leading to doing quarterly PPV shows in the United States and perhaps Mexico as well. The lone attempt at doing a Mexican PPV, the well received November 6, 1994 "AAA/IWC When Worlds Collide" show, drew an 0.28 buy rate and 44,000 total buys, basically along the lines or slightly better than the ECW level

March 16, 1998

-We don't have a clear picture of the buy rate for the Living Dangerously PPV. Going in, the projections were an 0.23 buy rate which would be about 53,000 buys, or a slight increase over the last show. The fact ECW continues to hold its level shows it is a player in this game, although if these numbers are correct, the small increase is probably due more to pro wrestling itself gaining so much in popularity over the past few months more than any other reason. ECW as of press time only had sketchy reports back from Viewers Choice and Request which really didn't indicate much because it did well (0.6) in many systems where it's television and live shows are strong, but virtually did zero buys in parts of the country where it has no exposure. We had received an independent estimate of an 0.3 buy rate and 69,000 buys, which would be a huge increase over the previous shows and if it holds up would be outstanding only because the same sources were estimating the WWF No Way Out PPV as doing between an 0.42 and 0.43, although that would be in about a 30% larger universe. Unlike the first three shows, this was done without any plugs or exposure on WWF television. Paul Heyman was mad because of how Jim Cornette made snide remarks about the show when WWF plugged November to Remember

-Indications are that the 2/22 SuperBrawl PPV drew a 1.10 buy rate which would be about 320,000 buys and \$4.12 million. It would make the third straight buy rate of above a 1.0. Under normal standards, that number would be considered huge, but it actually fell greatly under expectations since the first Hogan-Sting did a 1.9 and internally the company was predicting a

1.6 for this show, particularly after Souled Out without either Hogan or Sting on the show topped a 1.0

-There are cable industry predictions that Mania will do a 2.0 buy rate because of Tyson. One thing we've found out is thus far there is nobody who has been able to accurately predict PPV buy rates ahead of time

March 30, 1998

Preliminary estimates on the Living Dangerously PPV appear to be in the 0.23 to 0.25 range, or somewhere between 58,000 and 71,000 buys, more likely closer to the former number. It would be the most purchased ECW PPV to date, something that was pretty much expected with the expansion of the total universe to include Time-Warner Cable. The buy rate itself appears to be slightly lower than the first ECW PPV show, but ahead of the second and third shows, probably due to a combination of Time-Warner's additions being in markets ECW would be stronger than average in, combined with pro wrestling itself being considerably hotter now even compared with late November.

April 6, 1998

-At press time it is too early to get anything but preliminary figures for Wrestlemania, largely from satellite distributors and very early cable reports, but based on those projections, the buy rate appears to be along the lines of what Starrcade did, with preliminary estimates at between a 1.78 and a 2.0 buy rate, with more leaning toward the former.

-The 3/15 Uncensored PPV did an estimated 1.1 buy rate, which is almost exactly the same as WCW's Souled Out and SuperBrawl shows, despite being on paper a stronger show than either from a star power standpoint. It's a very good figure, but the feeling is the addition of Thursday and coming three weeks after SuperBrawl took the edge off Hogan and Savage drawing what Hogan had bragged would be the biggest buy rate in company history and what wound up as only a little more than half of Hogan-Sting I

-Preliminary estimates are the 3/13 UFC did about an 0.35 buy rate, which would be the lowest since the first show and with fewer homes hooked up, the lowest total audience to date (about 53,000 homes). The lack of visibility is the main reason, but the poor show from Japan didn't help matters any. Reportedly it only got to that figure because of a surprisingly strong replay showing, no doubt based on word of mouth because of the quality of the show.

April 13, 1998

The 3/29 Wrestlemania show is also expected to wind up as one of the biggest money shows in the history of pro wrestling. Depending upon which sources turn out to be more accurate, buy rate estimates for Wrestlemania range from 1.76 to 2.27 which would be between 550,000 and 700,000 buys. The WWF is releasing a projection of 700,000 buys based on reports from 35

percent of the total universe, which would be a \$10.5 million gross for Titan Sports (as 43% of the total PPV gross of \$24.46 million which would be an all-time pro wrestling record), which combined with a \$1 million live gate and \$273,000 in merchandise would be an \$11.8 million event. Legitimately, the Wrestlemania events between 1987 and 1990 probably all fell around that total numbers of buys, but at a lower price. Factoring in PPV, live gate, closed-circuit and merchandise, Wrestlemania III with Hogan vs. Andre probably legitimately did in excess of \$12 million and the next several years were probably close to that figure. In those years there were a far lower number of potential PPV homes and thus the buy rates in those days were much higher, probably peaking somewhere around an 8.0 for Wrestlemania III. Most independent sources were ranging from a 1.76 to 1.80 estimate on the buy rate. At that figure, Titan's share of the total \$19.22 million PPV gross would have been around \$8.26 million, combined with live gate and merchandise to be around a \$9.5 million show, so either way the show is going to turn out profitable no matter how much Mike Tyson really is getting paid. It would have been WWF's best buy rate for any event since either Wrestlemania IX from Las Vegas (Bret Hart vs. Yokozuna) which did an estimated 2.0 buy rate, or the 1992 version from the Hoosier Dome (Hulk Hogan vs. Sid Justice) which did a 2.3. WCW's Starrcade show this past December (Hogan vs. Sting), which by most independent estimates did as many if not more buys on PPV than Wrestlemania (as independent estimates for that show were in the 1.90 range), including live gate and merchandise, probably grossed for WCW in the \$8 million range due to it being sold for a lower price. Given that WCW didn't have the expense of Tyson tacked on, it is likely that Starrcade was a more profitable show than Mania even if Mania grossed more money, but both were financial successes.

April 20, 1998

The WWF is now estimated Wrestlemania at 715,000 to 720,000 buys or a 2.3 buy rate or a \$10,821,000 company PPV gross which would be the largest company PPV gross in history. Most independent sources have upped estimates into the 700,000 range as well. Wrestlers, particularly those high on the card, should be getting some huge PPV payoffs in about seven weeks

-Because the replay show did surprisingly well, the buy rate for the 3/13 UFC show looks to be around an 0.4, which would be 60,000 to 65,000 buys.

May 11, 1998

WWF is claiming 325,000 buys which would be a 1.03 buy rate for the Unforgiven PPV, which has to be much higher than any expectations, which would be a \$4.18 million company gross which would be among the higher figures in company history and that's for what is essentially a "B" level PPV show

May 18, 1998

An update on the Japanese PPV scene because people from the U.S. who think PPV in U.S. terms don't seem to understand where the technology is today in Japan. DirecTV, which broadcasts FMW and Arsion PPV events (and probably will do Michinoku Pro shows in the future) is only in 50,000 homes in all of Japan. There is no money to be made at the present time for these companies in doing PPV from buy rates and buys. DirecTV buys the shows from the promoters as a loss leader incentive to get wrestling fans to buy satellite dishes. The deal with FMW is only about \$150,000 for ten shows, however they did pay for production, special effects, etc. on the 4/30 show so it gave the FMW house show far more of a major league look to the event which is important in the long run even in Japan. Sky PerfecTV, which does Pancrase and will also be doing live monthly WCW PPVs (Spring Stampede from Denver was the first American PPV to go into Japan live), is now in 600,000 homes but it is a number that is growing rapidly so at this point with a 5.0 buy rate, there would be some money to be made. The Gracie/Takada match last year did an 8.0 buy rate, but far fewer homes were available at the time so it still wasn't any kind of a big money deal

May 25, 1998

We've heard conflicting reports on the Wrestlepalooza PPV as far as buy rate

June 1, 1998

ECW is claiming based on preliminary figures an 0.24 buy rate for the Wrestlepalooza PPV show on 5/3 from Marietta, GA. As mentioned last week, we had received from other cable sources that indicated the buy rate was way down from previous events, while Steve Karel at ECW claimed the buy rate was way up from all prior events. That figure is basically in line with previous shows that have all done between 0.20 and 0.27, although it would be by far the most profitable show to date because ECW cleared virtually the entire 34.5 million PPV universe as opposed to varying percentages of it for previous shows

June 8, 1998

-Preliminary estimates are that the Over the Edge show did an 0.65 buy rate which would be about 225,000 buys and a \$2.90 million company gross, which is a great number for an In Your House based on last year's standards, but a surprisingly big decline of approximately 31% from last month's Unforgiven show on buys and revenue with the same main event which did the surprisingly big number.

-It appears the most recent UFC show did between an 0.35 and 0.40 buy rate, which is what the shows have been doing for the most part of late

July 6, 1998

Those in the PPV business expect Bash at the Beach to do the same 2.2 buy rate that Wrestlemania did because of Malone and Rodman. They are setting themselves up for quite a

fall if they are budgeting based on those projections. There are even reports from people who think all the money they lost by the Holyfield fight being canceled at the last minute (and despite rumors to the contrary, the fact it hadn't sold a lot of tickets to Madison Square Garden had absolutely nothing to do with the show being canceled) will be made up by a windfall at Bash at the Beach. It probably will draw more money than King of the Ring, however

July 13, 1998

-Preliminary indications are that King of the Ring did about an 0.85 buy rate which would be a \$3.86 million company gross. It would be the most buys for a KOR show since 1994

-Years back, when the WWF was doing 8.0 buy rates (as opposed to today's 0.8s) when the universe was five million homes, or doing 400,000 buys, it was mind-boggling the revenue the business would be doing ten years later, which is today, when the universe was supposed to hit 60 million homes, as that would be close to five million homes. But the reality is the universe grew a little slower, but even at 35 million homes, except for the real biggies, 300,000 buys on a PPV is still considered a big number and maybe five years from now 300,000 will still be a big number... ECW doing a .24 buy rate today does about 80,000 buys. A .24 buy rate in a few years would be about 230,000 buys, or figuring the price at some point will be raised to \$24.95 instead of the current \$19.95 (and for the life of me I have no idea why ECW charges only \$19.95--well, actually I do know--it is pressure from outside cable forces that don't understand the marketplace--for its shows because it only serves to categorize the product as the low-rent choice and they won't be losing any viewers with the higher price and the difference is pure profit) would theoretically mean the company would take in around \$2.5 million six times per year just from PPV, which is operating capital that would make the company financially at the same level WCW was just a few years ago. For UFC, theoretically, if, with no publicity, it can maintain 0.4 buy rates, if it can get a reversal, which due to losses of boxing revenue may come soon

-Aldephi Cable, which is the eighth largest cable conglomerate in the country with two million PPV homes, has reversed its earlier position and effective immediately will again be running the UFC shows starting with the 7/17 taped show. Believe it or not, there is also some serious talk about Viewers Choice in Canada reversing its position. In the past, UFC PPV shows on VC-Canada had done in the 1.5 buy rate range, its strongest system of all. There is a lot of sentiment within the PPV world more favorable to UFC after the companies all spent so much money advertising the Holyfield fight and coming back with no revenue, and with boxing PPV revenue so much lower this year overall than projections and companies looking for ways to make the expected revenue back. As mentioned before, a lot of companies are of the belief that the WCW show with Rodman and Malone will make up for much of the lost revenue from Holyfield, figuring it will do a Wrestlemania level of buys, and if it doesn't, they'll again be looking for new ways to make up lost revenue.

July 20, 1998

-We have very preliminary Bash at the Beach buy rate information at press time that would indicate approximately 525,000 buys or about a 1.5 buy rate which would be a \$6.76 million company gross. If you figure that most of the recent WWF and WCW shows are averaging in the 0.8 range and there was no reason to think that without Rodman and Malone this show would be any different, the national publicity involving Rodman and Malone since the undercard was nothing to speak of meant an additional \$2.9 million in revenue on the show. The combined price of Rodman and Malone was probably in the \$1.25 million range (forget the media reports of \$1.5 million for Rodman and \$900,000 for Malone) and even throwing in Hogan's additional percentage of being part of such a large pie and several hundred thousand dollars more spent in mainstream advertising on this show as compared to any other show in company history, from a buy rate and profit standpoint the show was a huge success, maybe not to the degree of Wrestlemania or close to the level of the first Hogan-Sting, but a tremendous financial success nonetheless. In comparison, the two shows that Rodman appeared on last year, the Uncensored show where he appeared but didn't wrestle drew an estimated \$2.61 million and the Bash at the Beach where he did wrestle drew an estimated \$2.79 million, so this show looks to have done better than both of the previous shows combined, although again we have to point out these are very preliminary estimates and that the business is much hotter particularly in the mainstream at this time than it was even one year ago.

August 3, 1998

There isn't much to say about the WWF's Fully Loaded PPV show on 7/26 from Fresno, CA... We've received very preliminary buy rate information that this show did the lowest buy rate of the year for any WWF or WCW event.

August 10, 1998

-We've got three very different stories on how the 7/26 Fully Loaded PPV show did. The WWF claims 330,000 buys which would be an 0.92 buy rate, which would be nothing short of tremendous as it would beat out King of the Ring despite being a far less attractive show, although it is clear WWF is rapidly gaining momentum but still hard to believe that show could beat out KOR with the title match and Hell in the Cell. Sources in WCW, who have usually been on the money when it comes to these numbers, have claimed the buy rate was 0.34, which in this instance does sound ridiculously low given the state of the industry. One independent sources estimated 0.5 to 0.6 which would be the lowest of the year

-In what could prove to be the fatal blow for the Ultimate Fighting Championships, Viewers Choice this past week decided to drop carrying all future events. With Request, the other leading PPV distributor having gone out of business, this leaves UFC without a distributor and would leave the show with minimal PPV clearances, most of which would be either smaller companies that would have to be individually contacted, and in homes that have satellite dishes, which despite inflated numbers released to the contrary, in reality only numbers between 3.5 million to 4 million homes. Viewers Choice had already demoted UFC from VC-1, its primary PPV channel, to its secondary Hot Choice, which was only available in 8.5 million homes

nationwide giving the most recent UFC, a taped show that aired on 7/17, roughly 12 million potential clearances among the total PPV universe which is now in excess of 35 million homes. The decision to drop UFC altogether came because the majority of the systems that carry the Hot Choice channel, all TCI, Time-Warner (TCI and Time-Warner together own a majority of interest in Viewers Choice), Cablevision and other major systems had made corporate decisions not to carry UFC. There was a feeling that due to an apparent weak buy rate for the taped show, which in hindsight appears to have been a bad maneuver as it gave people the idea with the weak

August 17, 1998

ECW: We have little info on the Heat Wave PPV buy rate other than the show did roughly the same buy rate as the previous show in the scattered markets that have reported and that it did slightly more buys on USSB with the heavy promotion than it did on DirecTV for the prior show. USSB is going to air the ECW TV show now several times per week on its promotional station and in exchange, ECW is going to stay with USSB as its provider on PPV instead of going to the Ch. 101 on DirecTV which is where all the other PPV shows air on

August 24, 1998

-We've got some different versions of the numbers for WCW's Road Wild PPV show featuring Jay Leno. WCW sources are claiming 400,000 buys, which would be a 1.14 buy rate and a \$5.15 million company gross, which would be figures only slightly higher than WWF ended up with for its recent King of the Ring PPV show and well below what SummerSlam would be expected to legitimately draw. If Leno was truly getting \$1 million for charity for doing the show, and that was the figure released although as we've seen in the past, most figures released in the past on celebrities in wrestling have been inflated numbers, that combined with the \$500,000 spent on marketing the event, than the money spent didn't pay off in the buy rate considering without celebrities WCW was doing only slightly less than those range of numbers for its PPV shows this year. Basically for Leno to pay for himself and that figure, they'd have to have done about 425,000 buys, so at 400,000 they would be a little short. However, other sources are claiming that the 400,000 figure is a face-saving number and that the real number was closer to 320,000 or a .91 buy rate, which is about what most WCW and WWF shows have been doing these days even without seven figure celebrity payoffs and two weeks of Tonight Show hype. We've even had one national estimate as low as an 0.8. There were PPV industry sources that were predicting 700,000 buys for Road Wild, and it didn't even come close to that figure. It's not like the show lost money because in this day and age it's basically impossible for WWF and WCW to lose money producing PPV shows, but that Leno didn't pay off the way they expected and was not the box office success that WCW had with Karl Malone and Dennis Rodman.

-In other PPV news, early reports indicate the 8/2 ECW PPV show to have done between an 0.20 and 0.25 buy rate, which is the same range as they've been doing since the first show.

-The real buy rate for King of the Ring was a 1.1

-The 8/8 K-1 PPV appears to have done around an 0.11 buy rate, which would be about a \$340,000 company gross, which has to be a disappointment.

August 31, 1998

The 8/2 ECW PPV appears to have done between an 0.20 and 0.21 buy rate or about 70,000 buys or about a 15% decline from the previous show, which would wind up as a \$600,000 company gross. It would be logical to attribute much if not all of that decline to the show going head-to-head with the debut of Sunday Night Heat. It is all but official that ECW will move its PPV starting times to 8 p.m. Eastern provided Heat is renewed. WCW is still got Fall Brawl and Halloween Havoc locked into 7 p.m. starts for whatever reason and at this point plans on moving to 8 p.m. starting with World War III in November

September 7, 1998

Due to financial cutbacks, the make-up of the UFC PPV show continues to change. David Isaacs, who had been in charge of UFC for the past several years, officially stepped down on 9/1 and will be leaving Semaphore Entertainment Group in a few weeks. SEG CEO Bob Meyrowitz had of late been doing all the fighter negotiations and would basically run the show with John Perretti. Isaacs said that he felt in a few years that UFC would be a booming business due to changes in technology and cable systems having a greater channel capacity, but right now it's a hard fight and he decided against spending the next few years of his life fighting the same fight. He said that as it's structured right now, SEG can viably do a UFC with outside income provided from Brazil and/or Japan and if they can reach their goal of clearing a universe of 12-13 million which would mean, if they can do an 0.4 buy rate which is what the shows have been at, would be about 50,000 buys and that Meyrowitz wants to continue the fight. SEG took out a big ad in Multi Channel News advising cable companies they can pick the show up on a stand alone basis since Viewers Choice won't be distributing it and Media One has agreed to carry it and they expect others to follow suit.

September 14, 1998

Preliminary estimates are that SummerSlam did an estimated 1.48 buy rate which would be between 500,000 and 520,000 buys which would be a \$6.57 million gross, or in other words, a huge success. It would be along the same lines or just slightly behind what WCW did for the Bash at the Beach for Rodman and Malone, but far ahead of what WCW did with Jay Leno at Road Wild which turned out to be about 322,000 buys or an 0.93 buy rate.

September 28, 1998

WCW, without finalizing an undercard, drew a disappointing 0.93 buy rate in August despite all the mainstream pub for Jay Leno appearing, and followed it up with its lowest buy rate of the

year on 9/13 for Fall Brawl's War Games show at an estimated 0.7, less than half of what WWF did for SummerSlam two weeks earlier, despite it being the first scheduled match for Warrior in three years and coming off a build-up period when WCW's total television audience had broken all-time company and Monday night records and when the business overall seemed to be at a peak level.

October 5, 1998

Draka held its second U.S. PPV, and the first one available basically nationwide, on 9/25 from the Grand Olympic Auditorium in Los Angeles. There is little to say about the show, since virtually nobody ordered it. We only received five phone calls on the show, and considering we can get 100 calls on events that only do 0.1 buy rates, I'd suggest the buy rate fell well below that of "The Contenders" last year at 0.03.

October 12, 1998

Preliminary indications are that the Break Down PPV did an 0.86 buy rate which would be about 300,000 buys or a \$3.86 million gross which isn't bad for a show with an unimpressive line-up going in

November 2, 1998

Havoc went about three hours and 22 minutes in a time slot originally scheduled for a maximum of 2:50. The decision to go past the scheduled three hours was a late decision, perhaps decided as late as the day of the show. WCW had planned the show out to go three hours and 15 minutes and much of the heat has fallen on a company liaison to Viewers Choice and the cable industry, who apparently didn't get the word out of the importance that the show was going longer than its initial scheduling. Because of that, about 25% of the systems around the country cut the show off before its conclusion, with different systems cutting it off at different times. Some systems went down at about the two hour, 55 minute mark, or just before the finish of the Hogan vs. Warrior match. Some went down at the three hour, five minute mark which would be during the ring introductions of the Goldberg vs. Page match. Cable companies around the country, including Time Warner in New York and many of the TCI systems including major markets like Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area, cut the show off before its conclusion and offices were flooded with irate phone calls for the next two days, many viewers vowing to buy satellite dishes to avoid this happening again. How systems handled the problem varied. Most offered viewers the choice of the Tuesday replay for free or a rebate on the purchase price of \$29.95, which varied from \$10 in some systems, \$20 in others, and the entire purchase price in others. Virtually all callers were said to have taken the rebate rather than the Tuesday showing. The cable industry was said as a whole to be irate, because this was scripted pro wrestling, and not a shoot sport like UFC which had a similar problem in shows in 1994 and 1995, and it caused untold man hours of listening to irate callers over the next two days, compounded supposedly by charges (WCW people have claimed this and addressed the complaint on the air and we don't have any confirmation that they actually happened) by

competitive wrestling groups that WCW did this on purpose as a ratings ploy for the next day. The cost of that win, and I want to make clear that I'm virtually certain the PPV snafu the previous night wasn't a ratings ploy but a major screw-up within WCW, even though WCW no doubt was desperate to win the ratings, would be estimated at more than \$2 million, shared equally by WCW/Time Warner and the cable industry. If one would presume Havoc doing 400,000 buys (a 1.16 buy rate), then approximately 100,000 homes were cut off before the main event. Given these figures and they are all approximations, from a WCW standpoint, the show that would gross an estimated \$5.15 million should now gross more like \$4 million. Eric Bischoff, claiming that his conversations with Viewers Choice to explain the problem the next day saw him confronted with executives who claimed that officials of Titan Sports had told them this was all a ratings ploy. Bischoff had Tony Schiavone explain that contrary to what the competitors were saying, it wasn't a ratings ploy and that they don't resort to shock value (a knock at the 10/19 Raw) to win the ratings like the competitors. Because of all the controversy, Bischoff rescinded the original plan to give out the result of the Raw main event between Steve Austin and Ken Shamrock on the taped show during the first hour of Nitro.

-Early returns indicate the WWF Judgment Day PPV did an 0.89 buy rate which would be an estimated \$3.99 million company gross, or slightly above what most of the recent shows have been doing

November 9, 1998

-The Halloween Havoc PPV was a fiasco due to the communications of going long, but that had nothing to do with the buy rate. Early estimates are an 0.78 buy rate, which is a total disaster for the first Hogan vs. Warrior match. This only confirms what everyone knew about Warrior, and to a lesser extent Hogan. The total gross on that figure would be expected to be \$3.48 million, however a large percentage of that figure is going to have to be rebated because of all the problems. The rebates won't reach the \$2 million figured last week because the buy rate came in so much lower than expected, but would still be in the \$1.35 million range shared between WCW and the cable industry. To come out with a \$2.8 million gross for the first Hogan-Warrior match is a total disaster, and the thinking going in is that Warrior would only be good for a few weeks of ratings and one huge buy rate... WWF, using an Undertaker vs. Kane match and with Steve Austin only working as ref, one week earlier did an estimated 0.89 buy rate.

-MMA: Multi-Channel News did a story on the most recent UFC, estimating the buy rate at 0.55 on a universe of 13 million homes, which if those numbers would be correct (and I'm skeptical of them), would be 71,500 buys and a \$767,000 gross. I'm skeptical of the number of homes being cleared as leading into the show we were told a figure of about eight million, since not all that many cable systems were carrying the event and the total dish universe is exaggerated greatly in all trade magazines. The buy rate itself was a huge increase over the 0.4 that the show has generally been doing over the past year but no matter how its being figured, total buys would be way down because so few cable systems carried the show. Some of the reason, maybe even all of the reason for the increased buy rate, is due to the fact that it was mainly available to dish owners and dish owners by tradition buy PPV shows at a higher rate than viewers with only

cable. As a comparison over a similar universe, ECW has been doing in the 9,000 buy range on dishes, WWF and WCW for regular shows around 30,000 to 40,000 and for the bigger shows even more, and this past UFC did about 23,000 so it's somewhere in the middle

December 7, 1998

Buy rate estimates for the World War III PPV have ranged from 0.55 to 0.7 which is well below what these shows have been doing, but still not a big surprise since nobody expected it to do well. We don't have a figure for Survivor Series yet, but it was expected to do better than the 0.8 to 0.9 range that WWF has claimed its PPV had been doing for the past several months. The ECW November to Remember looks to be in the ballpark with its previous show which was a little better than an 0.2. Final figures on the last UFC, with the heavily constricted universe, also are finishing up at an 0.55

December 14, 1998

-The latest estimates for the Survivor Series PPV are a whopping 1.45 buy rate, which would be a \$6.44 million company gross, a figure that will trail SummerSlam just slightly. That more than doubled what WCW drew one week later for World War III. In 1997, the top five grossing PPV shows were all WCW. In 1998, WWF will have three of the top four

-The World Wrestling Federation's Capital Carnage United Kingdom-only PPV show from the London Arena on 12/6 turned into largely a regular house show with some lengthly added interviews and our reports indicate it was a thumbs in the middle type PPV show but a very heated event live... It was the WWF's second attempt at a UK-only PPV show, and some of the political problems that plagued the first show more than 14 months earlier and led to it taking so long for a second one were still evident as many of the major cable systems in the U.K. didn't carry the event. We're told the first show in September 1997 was carried by 25% of the cable systems in the U.K., and this show was cleared by 80%, and the total buys were double that of the first show, which would actually be a buy rate decrease itself since clearances were more than tripled and the first buy rate at the time was considered disappointing... The show is expected to be released in a few weeks in the U.S. for home video.

December 28, 1998

Early estimates of the Rock Bottom PPV are an 0.78 buy rate or a \$3.48 million company gross. It's about the same level or slightly down from most of the "B" level PPV shows for WWF have been doing the past several months

January 18, 1999

Buy rate estimates for Starrcade are in the 1.15 range which is a \$5.11 million show. It would make the first month since July where WCW beat WWF on PPV as Rock bottom did about an 0.8

January 25, 1999

The 1/8 UFC PPV appears to have done around an 0.65 buy rate, which is unbelievable given everything, but it doesn't mean all that many buys given the small universe. The show was available almost exclusively to dish homes and throughout Canada, and the total universe was probably in the six to seven million range meaning probably 40,000 to 45,000 total buys which would mean a total company gross of about \$460,000

February 8, 1999

Preliminary reports indicate the Royal Rumble did a 1.57 buy rate which would be a \$6.95 million show. It would be the biggest Rumble as far as buys are concerned in history, and be in the same ballpark as SummerSlam and last year's WCW Bash at the Beach for the Rodman vs. Malone deal. So it's a huge success. So in following the policy that if the truth makes you look good, you have to lie anyway, on TV this week, Michael Cole claimed the WWF had surpassed Mike Tyson as the leading draw on PPV strongly hinting as if the Rumble had broken Tyson's records. I don't know what math they are using, as the Tyson-Holyfield records were a 6.0 buy rate and something like \$50 million. Even the most recent Tyson-Botha, which was considered a huge disappointment in the industry, still did a 1.88 buy rate and \$12.6 million, which was less than half of what the last time Tyson made the comeback and the Peter McNeely fight did

February 15, 1999

WWF is publicly claiming that Royal Rumble did a 1.88 buy rate and 700,000 total buys which would be a \$9 million company gross on the show. The claim is that it is the second biggest PPV in company history trailing only Wrestlemania from last year. Of course in the late 80s and early 90s they were constantly claiming all the PPVs did 750-900,000 buys. The 700,000 claim is where the idea of being a bigger PPV draw than Tyson as said on Raw came in. WWF is claiming the Tyson-Botha did 650,000 buys (most independent estimates are in the 675,000 range although the promoters claim 750,000). Anyway, considering Tyson's latest plight, that's all immaterial. Vince McMahon was quoted recently in the New York Daily News as suggesting when Tyson gets released from prison, he should join the WWF and not go back to boxing (which isn't as bad advice as it sounds on the surface) because he could make him the biggest star ever

February 22, 1999

It's clear the big revenue source is the PPV shows. Heyman estimates \$250,000 per show in costs. The 1/8 show he estimated would draw an 0.24 buy rate, which would take in about \$815,000, revenue clearly needed to keep up the television expenses. He claims to be getting killed on the delay, that is, the money being spent to produce a show has to largely be paid at

the time the show goes off. He doesn't see any PPV revenue from the show for three or four months.

March 1, 1999

-The St. Valentine's Day Massacre appears to have done 450,000 buys, or a 1.21 buy rate, which would be a \$5.79 million company gross. It's the biggest buy rate ever for an In Your House event, but that is hardly a surprise with a McMahon vs. Austin cage match on top after being built up for most of the year. In comparison, the de la Hoya fight the night before did 675,000 buys and grossed \$11.61 million as the promoters cut. I guess we won't be hearing this week that McMahon or Austin are the biggest drawing cards on PPV. We probably will again next month since Wrestlemania will almost certainly do 800,000 buys

-In a situation described by owner Paul Heyman as the company literally being days or weeks from folding due to running out of money, ECW made deals this past week which Heyman proclaimed puts the company in better financial position than it has been at any time over the past year... The bigger deal was a co-promotional deal on PPV shows with Buena Vista Television, a Disney subsidiary. Earlier in the week Heyman was hoping to get Buena Vista to buy into ECW in an ownership capacity, but Heyman said the deal agreed upon is Buena Vista would be partners in PPV, television ad sales and syndication as opposed to partners in the company as a whole. Heyman said the agreed upon deal is that starting with the 5/16 PPV show, that Buena Vista would pay all up front costs of producing the PPV shows (ECW has been spending approximately \$250,000 up front on its PPV shows although production upgrades would naturally upgrade the costs) and spend in excess of \$100,000 on promotion and marketing of the shows. In addition, Viewers Choice Canada will begin airing ECW on PPV starting with that show. When the PPV money comes in, Buena Vista will receive the money first, taking out all of their expenses, and also receiving a major cut of any increased revenue from PPV above the current 0.24 buy rate level.

March 8, 1999

About the only good news during the week for WCW as far as comparative numbers were concerned, besides strong house show performances in San Antonio, Greenville, SC and for Nitro in Chapel Hill were that even though WWF presented an Austin vs. McMahon cage match after a year of build-up on its St. Valentine's Day Massacre show, which did a 1.21 buy rate, WCW was in the ballpark one week later for SuperBrawl headlined by Flair vs. Hogan doing a 1.10 which would be a \$5.27 million company gross, and WCW would have been even closer without that terrible skit on the Tampa Nitro show with the beating in the field which no doubt hurt the buy rate.

March 29, 1999

The Uncensored PPV appears to have done about an 0.73 buy rate, which is a significant drop from the 1.1 of SuperBrawl for the same Hogan-Flair main event. Part of the decline can be

attributed to March being the same month at Wrestlemania and this show coming one day after Holyfield-Lewis which did a 3.3 buy rate and \$60 million making it one of the biggest PPV shows in history, not to mention the bad taste being left in most people's mouth from that show. Uncensored would have done about 270,000 buys or \$3.48 million company gross. Last month WCW did almost the same buy rate as WWF, and this month they'll be lucky to do one-third. I'll say this again, but even though Flair is still the best heel in the business when it comes to getting his opponent over and in swaying the emotions of the crowd and is a better worker in the ring playing that role, he will lose both his drawing power and ratings power going this route at this point in his career

April 12, 1999

-Based on early estimates, Wrestlemania XV, billed by the WWF as the most watched and greatest WM ever, will be the biggest money PPV pro wrestling show in history. Early estimates are a 2.23 buy rate, which totals 830,000 buys, which would be an approximately \$12.47 million company gross. The buy rate would be basically the same as last year's show (according to our figures, it would actually be slightly lower than last year which did a 2.3), but with the number of homes with PPV capability having grown by several million over the past year, the number of buys increased from approximately 720,000, which is believed to be the previous high water mark for a pro wrestling PPV show. The show will no doubt be significantly more profitable than last year as well because there is no \$3.5 million price tag for Mike Tyson cutting into the final bottom line and I'd guess more corporate sponsorship and less money spent on celebrity guests. In the late 80s/early 90s, WWF often claimed 900,000 buys for its Wrestlemania shows, but nowadays the company is claiming last year's version as the all-time high before this year's show happened, and the numbers released in the past for shows in that era were greatly inflated. However, there is no way to put this show, in its proper perspective, as being ahead of the most famous and overall successful Wrestlemania of all, No. 3 from the Pontiac Silverdome. That show, besides selling the Silverdome out with that attendance figure that is quoted forever as the largest indoor sports crowd in history (but is it a sports event?), drew a buy rate billed at the time as 10.2% by the WWF (probably 8% is a more realistic figure which is none too shabby considering I don't think anything short of Tyson vs. Ali in their primes today could do a number close to that today as Lewis-Holyfield legit did a 3.23 buy rate or 1,200,000 buys and the promoters' cut of the PPV gross was about \$26 million). Hogan vs. Andre was about 500,000 buys, a larger buy rate than any event in history aside from a few major boxing matches, with a price tag at the time of \$19.95 at a time when the PPV universe was about six million homes. So while this year's show did 830,000 buys, it did so when there are more than 37 million homes with PPV capability. That Wrestlemania also drew another 450,000 fans watching on closed-circuit television, so totalling all three purchase numbers (live attendance, PPV and closed circuit) you get more than one million for WM III and just under 850,000 this year although realistically you can make a valid claim that more people watched this show live because you would think the average is a few people per home on PPV.

-WRESTLEMANIA HISTORY

I - 3/31/85 (Hulk Hogan & Mr. T vs. Paul Orndorff & Roddy Piper)

II - 4/5/86 (Hogan vs. King Kong Bundy) - 7.0 buy rate
III - 3/29/87 (Hogan vs. Andre the Giant) - 8.0 buy rate
IV - 3/27/88 (Savage wins WWF title tourney) - 6.5 buy rate
V - 4/2/89 (Hogan vs. Savage) - 6.0 buy rate
VI - 4/1/90 (Hogan vs. Ultimate Warrior) - 4.5 buy rate
VII - 3/23/91 (Hogan vs. Sgt. Slaughter) - 3.5 buy rate
VIII - 4/5/92 (Hogan vs. Sid Justice) - 2.3 buy rate
IX - 4/4/93 (Bret Hart vs. Yokozuna) - 2.0 buy rate
X - 3/20/94 (Hart vs. Yokozuna) - 1.68 buy rate
XI - 4/2/95 (Lawrence Taylor vs. Bam Bam Bigelow) - 1.3 buy rate
XII - 3/31/96 (Hart vs. Shawn Michaels) - 1.2 buy rate
XIII - 3/23/97 (Undertaker vs. Sid) - 0.77 buy rate
XIV - 3/29/98 (Michaels vs. Steve Austin) - 2.3 buy rate

April 19, 1999

The latest updated estimates on Wrestlemania indicate closer to 850,000 to 875,000 buys, which would be a 2.28 to 2.35 buy rate or roughly exactly the same or a very slight increase in the buy rate from last year. The total buys was more than 100,000 over the previous high water mark for a wrestling PPV show

April 26, 1999

Spring Stampede PPV estimated doing only an 0.6 buy rate, the lowest for a WCW show in years (Hogan vs. Page vs. Sting vs. Flair) which is a \$2.87 company gross, or about one-fourth of what Mania did two weekends earlier.

May 10, 1999

Backlash drew an estimated 1.06 buy rate which translates into about \$5.09 million. In comparison, the WCW Spring Stampede show two weeks earlier did an 0.60

June 7, 1999

WCW is planning on doing its own kickboxing PPV show headlined by Dennis Alexio vs. Rick Roufas. By the way, the last PPV kickboxing show on 5/14 with Don "The Dragon" Wilson as the big draw did roughly 6,000 buys nationwide or a 0.016 buy rate

July 12, 1999

King of the Ring did an estimated 1.13 buy rate which is up in total buys to about 440,000 but basically the same buy rate as last year. That would be a \$5.67 million company gross out of the show. The show didn't quite hit the level of triple what the Great American Bash did two weeks earlier (0.43)

July 26, 1999

Currently ECW's PPVs are ranging from 77,000 to 85,000 buys, which is between an 0.21 and 0.24 buy rate

August 30, 1999

-Although SummerSlam looks to do great numbers, the 7/25 Fully Loaded PPV was the first WWF show this year not to crack the 1.0 buy rate mark, doing an 0.94 which works out to about 350,000 buys, which is an estimated \$4.51 million in PPV revenue

-WCW: Major show 7/99: Bash at the Beach (13,624/11,397/\$444,737/est. 0.4 buy rate/est. \$1.92 million PPV revenue)

September 6, 1999

We don't have any official numbers, but SummerSlam looks to have done around the same 600,000 buys as last year, which means it won't be anywhere near record levels, although that is a healthy number.

September 13, 1999

-WWF is now claiming Fully Loaded did between 390,000 and 400,000 total buys. Still no company estimate in for SummerSlam.

-Buy rate for Road Wild with the Hogan-Nash retirement match looks to be about an 0.55 or about 200,000 buys, which is up from the previous two shows although this show had both Hogan and Goldberg, who weren't on the previous two shows that were doing in the 0.4 range.

-There is thought being given to moving the 12/31 WCW PPV show from Tempe, AZ to Pontiac, MI. Viewers Choice and cable analysts Paul Kagan and Associates sold WCW on the idea that a New Years Eve pro wrestling PPV show would do a 2.0 buy rate, citing the huge buy rate a New Years Eve Howard Stern special did (1.5) a few years ago and going with the logic pro wrestling as the hottest thing on PPV would do far better than entertainment specials on PPV. I don't even want to get into how faulty their logic is, from Stern spending months of hyping his special which got far more mainstream hype than another pro wrestling PPV in a universe of 30 per year will get, to WCW not being a hot product these days. So WCW will be doing PPVs on both 12/19 and 12/31.

September 27, 1999

-Major show 8/99: SummerSlam (17,370/15,973 paid/\$557,124/est. 1.61 buy rate/est. \$7.73 million)

-Major show 8/98: Road Wild (5,500/all freebies/est. 0.54 buy rate/est. \$2.59 million)

October 18, 1999

The WCW Fall Brawl PPV in reality did far worse than has been reported anywhere (slightly less than 0.30) and was the lowest buy rate for any PPV show ever for either WWF or WCW and probably even UFC as well.

October 25, 1999

-Major show 9/99: Unforgiven (15,779 paid/\$505,477/est. 0.85 buy rate/est. \$4.07 million PPV revenue)

-Major show 9/99: Fall Brawl (7,491/3,347 paid/\$97,600/est. 0.29 buy rate/est. \$1.39 million PPV revenue)

November 1, 1999

Very early figures for the No Mercy PPV indicate about a 0.8 buy rate and 300,000 buys

November 8, 1999

WWF is estimating 330,000 buys for the No Mercy PPV, which would be about an 0.88 buy rate. At this point the September Unforgiven PPV show looks to be at 375,000 buys which would be right at a 1.0

December 6, 1999

-Preliminary figures list the Survivor Series as doing 425,000 buys, which would be roughly a 1.14 buy rate and approximately \$5.47 million in company revenue. This puts it ahead of the September and October PPV shows but well behind SummerSlam, which did about 600,000 buys but also based on pub should have done a lot better. Last year's Survivor Series did a 1.30 buy rate.

-The Mayhem buy rate looks to be about 0.45 which would be about 165,000 buys or \$2.16 million in company revenue. That's a 28.6% drop from last year's World War III November PPV show.

December 27, 1999

Very early estimates of the Armageddon PPV are that it did between an 0.90 and 0.97 buy rate which would be around a \$4.6 million company gross. In about 35% of the homes, it was very difficult to order the show at the last minute because the 800 number went dead, although there

were back-ups so if one wanted to order it bad enough they would be able to (we were among the homes that couldn't dial the 800 number at the last minute because of a software failure but it was relatively easy and only minorly annoying to dial directly to the cable company and order the show). That is significantly up from the Rock Bottom PPV in December of last year that did an 0.78 buy rate, which would be the first time in several months that a WWF PPV significantly beat out what it did the previous year.

January 10, 2000

Preliminary figures indicate Starrcade as a gigantic disappointment, drawing in the 0.3 to 0.4 buy rate range and we're told a lot closer to 0.3 as things look. It was only slightly better than Fall Brawl which was the lowest buy rate for either of the two big companies in the history of PPV so it makes No. 2 on that worst buy rates for a major company in history list. That is reality and I don't know how that reality can be explained away since they had months to build Hart vs. Goldberg. At this point the plan looks to be to build for Goldberg's return at Uncensored in Miami. Based on WWF failing to sellout Raw in that same building which is Rock's home town, the odds of doing an impressive live gate for the show, since the previous WCW Nitros in Miami were horrible and the last one didn't draw at all, don't look promising

January 24, 2000

There was good news and bad news from a numbers standpoint from WCW coming out of the weekend. Early figures from the Souled Out PPV indicate in most markets returning it came in at below the Starrcade numbers, so it was well below 0.3 and probably in ECW country. It is said to be too early to tell if it'll break the Fall Brawl record for the lowest buy rate in history for either of the major companies. Clearly, the internet controversy did nothing to help the show. It probably did nothing to hurt it because the show wasn't going to do any numbers anyway.

January 31, 2000

We're now being told the Souled Out buy rate was actually lower than Fall Brawl, making it the lowest in history for either of the big two promotions and for that matter lower than any UFC and probably in the league of the highest ECW's.

February 14, 2000

The 1/23 Royal Rumble did about a 1.58 buy rate which would be around 600,000 buys (as opposed to about 95,000 buys for WCW Souled Out the previous week and around 80,000 for ECW the week before that). The number of buys and revenue (about \$7.73 million to the WWF) would be the second biggest of any Rumble in history, trailing last year which did about 700,000 buys. It was the fifth highest buy rate of the 12 Rumbles on PPV (buy rates in the early 90s by and large were far higher than now because PPV was more of a novelty and there weren't 12 shows per promotion per year) with the record being the 1991 Rumble in Miami. This is considered a good sign because in the WWFE's prospectus of late, they were estimating only

650,000 buys for Wrestlemania due to Steve Austin not being in the main event, and this Rumble seems to indicate they'll easily top that figure.

March 13, 2000

-Preliminary estimates are that the No Way Out PPV did a 1.20 buy rate, which is an excellent number for the show between Royal Rumble and Wrestlemania, which often does poorly. It's almost the exact number as last year's show did (1.21) with the first ever singles match of McMahon vs. Austin in a cage. The overall company gross for the event would be approximately \$5.80 million.

-The SuperBrawl buy rate is coming in at closer to 0.15 than 0.20, which is by far the lowest buy rate ever for one of the big two companies. In fact, it is lower than most ECW buy rates, considerably lower than AAA did and in the range of what UWFI and K-1 (the early ones promoted by Bischoff from Japan, not the Vegas show which did .10) did with no television whatsoever. The fact this was done with Hogan and Flair's first PPV match back after months speaks volumes that this company needs an entire face lift, and at this point, they're better off biting the bullet for a while with quarterly PPV shows that they spend three months building because there is no reason the next show is going to do even as well. To put things into perspective, WCW's estimated company gross on the event was \$773,000, and that's barely more than WWF grossed just for their Raw house show in Atlanta and less than WCW had grossed for a few of its biggest Nitros in the past. Even within the company the feeling is that Uncensored will do even worse

March 27, 2000

-WCW Uncensored on 3/19 at the American Airlines Arena in Miami went back to being the Hulk Hogan show, as he won not only the main event--twice--but also the world title match that he wasn't even in... . Early estimates are the show did approximately 47,000 buys--hovering between an 0.12 and 0.13 buy rate, probably in the neighborhood of half of what the ECW PPV the previous week figures to have done.

-Revised estimates of the No Way Out PPV are coming in slightly higher, to where the buys would be closer to 480,000 and the gross to WWF would be \$6.18 million so it would have slightly beaten the McMahon vs. Austin cage match from February 1999. That's an awfully impressive accomplishment given all the build up leading to that match one year ago

April 10, 2000

Some notes from the eight hour Wrestlemania pregame show. The show was very well produced from all accounts. Most of the reaction we've heard on it was largely based on the honesty of the history. There were people who either were surprised it was as honest as it was, but recognized there were outright lies and exaggerations, while others felt it was the typical manipulation and another attempt to re-write history. They heavily downplayed Hogan's

contributions and tried to portray him as a star during the 80s, but Andre as the star, and ran a lot of his footage in black & white to make it seem even more ancient. Some of the wrestlers, such as Jericho, came across as having really been wrestling fans growing up while a lot of the suits, most notably Pat Patterson and Gerald Brisco, were out there trying to rewrite history. They were more respectful to Bret Hart, although they played up Shawn Michaels bigger, but praised the Hart vs. Steve Austin match. In one of the funniest segments, Patterson and Brisco were talking about themselves wanting to see a 60:00 match before the Michaels-Hart match and felt they were the only two wrestlers around who could pull it off. McMahon, they claimed, was against it, because he was afraid the audience wouldn't have the patience and people would walk out during the match. They acted as if the match was a huge triumph where they were proven right, but the funny thing is that even though it was a great match, the fans live did start leaving in droves from the 30:00 mark on, and the arena was 1/3 empty by the last 10:00. The show was used to push the McMahon family as the reason for Wrestlemania's success and downplay the contribution of the performers. McMahon even claimed credit for saving Andre's life, saying Andre was "ready to die" with nothing left to live for before the angle turning him heel and that angle kept him alive (funny that he lived six more years, many years after his heel run ended and had many years being "kept alive" working in Japan long after McMahon stopped using him). Kevin Sullivan then buried Hogan, saying it was Andre who drew the house at Wrestlemania III. Vince even took credit for creating the Hulk Hogan character and insinuated Terry Bollea would have been nothing in the wrestling business otherwise. The Rock did an interview ripping on SuperBrawl. When Undertaker vs. Nash was aired, the footage was edited to where Nash was never shown getting any offense

April 17, 2000

Preliminary estimates are that Wrestlemania did approximately 875,000 buys, which would be a 2.35 buy rate. Based on those numbers, it would be the largest non-boxing PPV as far as orders are concerned in history. The old record was last year's Wrestlemania at 800,000 buys. It should be noted that at this point in time last year they were also estimating 875,000 and the real number turned out slightly lower. We don't have any percentage breakdown as to who ordered the \$49.95 as opposed to the \$34.95 package, so it's impossible to estimate revenue accurately, but if we go by the assumption that 40% ordered the 12-hour package, which I believe to be a very conservative estimate it would make Titan's take just off the PPV of the event be more than \$15 million. Wrestlemania in Australia was the second biggest PPV event in history, trailing only the Mike Tyson vs. Francis Botha fight. PPV is in its infancy in the country, so that only means 24,000 orders at \$19.95 Australian and many of the big boxing matches, because they had a higher price tag, did gross more money

April 24, 2000

There has been no officially announced figure for Wrestlemania's PPV. The latest estimates are more than 800,000 buys. There is no solid estimate on the percentage of whom bought \$34.95 or \$49.95 other than the company's pre-show estimate of 20 percent buying the 12-hour more expensive version is going to be surpassed.

May 1, 2000

Early indications are that WCW Spring Stampede did an 0.24 buy rate, which would be considered terrible under normal circumstances, but all things considered including they basically had no show announced until Thunder three days before and they're coming off a year of bad PPVs and two even worse buy rates, I wouldn't call the number a negative.

May 15, 2000

Very early estimates on the Backlash PPV on 4/30 are that it did 625,000 buys. Internal estimates have ranged from 600,000 to 650,000, which would be about a 1.65 buy rate. There are media sources over the past week that have given the number as 700,000 buys, but this figure seems more in line with what the company itself's first estimates are. That would leave the WWF gross for the event at an estimated \$8 million. If that number holds up, it would be the fifth largest number of buys over at least the past nine years for a WWF PPV and probably ranking sixth overall for that same period (WCW's Starrcade 1997 with Hogan vs. Sting did about 650,000 buys). The top five appear to have been roughly 800,000 both this year and last year for Wrestlemania, about 730,000 for the 1998 Wrestlemania with Mike Tyson's involvement; and the 1999 Royal Rumble (built around McMahon and Austin plus Rock vs. Mankind I Quit match) at 640,000 buys. The 2000 Royal Rumble as well as both the 1998 and 1999 SummerSlams all ended up doing about 600,000 buys and the WCW 1998 Bash at the Beach built around Dennis Rodman and Karl Malone did just under 600,000. It should be noted that preliminary estimates often turn out to be considerably higher than the final number turns out to be, often by as much as 100,000 but even with this margin of error, the show was a huge success for a so-called "minor" PPV. The estimates for the Lennox Lewis vs. Michael Grant fight which took place the night before Backlash were in the 300,000 to 375,000 range, which was considered a major flop. Backlash would destroy every record for a WWF PPV event that wasn't one of the big three (Wrestlemania, SummerSlam and Royal Rumble). The WWF probably had a half dozen or so PPVs between 1988 and 1990 that did in the same range when far fewer homes had PPV so the numbers are far more impressive than today's, but when they were only running three PPV events per year at that point. The 1987 Hogan vs. Andre PPV was realistically the most impressive figures ever for a WWF event, as they did probably 400,000 to 450,000 buys when only five million homes were wired (as opposed to Wrestlemania this year doing 800,000 buys when 38 million homes were wired) as well as another 450,000 fans at closed-circuit locations. The previous all-time record for the largest number of buys for a non-big five PPV by the WWF was the 480,000 for the No Way Out PPV for the HHH vs. Cactus Jack retirement vs. WWF title Hell in a Cell match.

May 22, 2000

The Slamboree buy rate was not released by WCW because the figure was such an embarrassment. It was said to be below an 0.2, making it at least one of the three lowest PPV

buy rates in company history. So much for the mainstream curiosity buys of Arquette and the successful rub of Kidman by Hogan and how much all that internet hype for seven years by Douglas for a match with Flair actually means in real life. It's clear that however nice a guy Arquette is, he cost the company business at every turn because it was something wrestling fans rejected.

May 29, 2000

While WCW has not released a buy rate for Slamboree, there are industry sources who peg the figure at 0.14, which would be the second lowest buy rate in history for a major promotion PPV. In Canada, ECW and WCW are doing identical numbers while in the U.S., ECW's numbers appear to be ahead of WCW's. WCW is putting out PPV specials on DirecTV regularly of its various performers. I wonder what the buy rate was a few weeks back for the Disco Inferno PPV.

June 19, 2000

Judgment Day on 5/21 drew an estimated 400,000 buys, which would be roughly a 1.05 buy rate. If the number holds up, it would be the lowest figure so far this year, although realistically that should have been expected as it didn't have the something special in the main event that the traditional Royal Rumble, the retirement and Hell in a Cell with Mick Foley, Wrestlemania, or the return of Austin all would have had.

July 10, 2000

The Great American Bash PPV drew an 0.19 buy rate which would be about a \$935,000 company gross on the show. That's with the combination of teasing Hogan's retirement, Flair's retirement and the announcement that was supposed to change the entire face of the pro wrestling industry and they did a buy rate along the lines of what ECW does with one hour of relatively low rated TV with no lighting. WCW has attempted to spin that as a success by stating it's a 25 percent increase over the previous months show.

July 24, 2000

Preliminary estimates for King of the Ring are a 1.19 buy rate, which would be 475,000 total buys, slightly up from 1.13 last year. We also heard another estimate quite a bit lower, in the 375,000 to 400,000 buy range.

July 31, 2000

Early estimates have the Bash at the Beach doing an 0.19 buy rate, which is a \$1.22 million company gross. More than half of the total would go to Hogan (\$675,000 base)

August 7, 2000

-Preliminary estimates are that the Fully Loaded PPV drew 415,000 buys, which is about a 1.04 buy rate and would be about a \$5.34 million company gross. Any figure over 350,000 buys would have to be considered a success because they were putting so-called unproven drawing talent in the main slots and also because Benoit was not hyped and portrayed as Rock's biggest challenge as much as simply a transition challenge before getting back to HHH. Yet, this show actually appears to have drawn (and remember, there can be major discrepancies between the first announced estimates and the final numbers, which actually aren't for sure until 90 days after the fact) drew slightly more buys than Rock vs. HHH drew (400,000) for their 60 minute match at Judgment Day. It marks Rock's eighth PPV main event that topped the 1.0 mark, putting him, at the supposed age of 28, in fifth place on the all-time records behind only Hogan, Flair, Austin and Hart. Officially, the Backlash PPV on 4/30 drew right at 700,000 buys, which would be one of the largest of all-time and the biggest so-called non-major card. The fact that Backlash greatly outdrew King of the Ring and that Fully Loaded did about the same, shows that the idea of major and non-major events, at least outside of Royal Rumble, Wrestlemania and SummerSlam, is no longer an issue when it comes to getting people to buy, as they buy based on the card, not the name of the show with those noted exceptions.

-Viewers Choice Canada is considering no longer airing ECW PPV's unless the company gets back on television in Canada, pending a decision shortly. Even the Anarchy Rulz show on 10/1 is in danger of not airing.

August 28, 2000

-King of the Ring as a PPV appears to have come in slightly below the original projections at just over 400,000 buys with Rock & Undertaker & Kane vs. Vince & Shane & HHH, or roughly the same level as the Rock vs. HHH 60:00 match PPV did. The early projections for the July PPV, headlined by Rock vs. Benoit, are that it'll do slightly better than the two previous shows. Even if it stays even or declines slightly, for a variety of reasons, that has to be considered a pretty big success and shows at this point there is no risk in mixing up the characters on top and mixing new people in, and it's the mixing new people in that gives the company depth and more long-term possibilities

-WCW is planning on changing the names of many of the PPV shows in 2001, perhaps as many as eight or nine, but keeping Starrcade, Halloween Havoc and probably Bash at the Beach.

September 18, 2000

-Preliminary estimates for SummerSlam are that it will end up doing 560,000 buys, which is roughly a 1.40 buy rate and \$7.21 million as WWFE's share. It's interesting that SummerSlam, traditionally the No. 2 show of the year behind Mania, will at best finish No. 4 as Mania, Royal Rumble and Backlash were all considerably ahead.

-ECW: The long talked about plan of moving from doing bi-monthly PPV shows to going monthly appears on the books as they are doing 10/1 in St. Paul, 11/5 in Villa Park, IL and 12/3 at the Hammerstein Ballroom in Manhattan. With buy rates dropping badly this year for WCW and also dropping of late for ECW, only WWF has held steady and in some cases shown increases during the early part of the year before levelling off the past few months. With 36 live pro wrestling PPVs on the books already out of 52 Sundays in 2001 (actually only an increase from 31 this year), viewers are more and more going to pick and choose rather than make every show a must-see affair, although I guess that has been the case now for some time anyway.

October 23, 2000

Viewers Choice Canada has agreed to continue broadcasting the ECW PPV events even though the company has no television in Canada with losing TNN.

October 30, 2000

They've re-named the early 2001 PPVs. The 1/14 show will tentatively be called Sin, instead of Souled Out, the 2/18 show will still be called SuperBrawl, but now SuperBrawl revenge and the 3/18 show, formerly Uncensored, will be tentatively be called WCW Greed. I guess because the NBA and NFL ratings were down last season, the way they'll address it is to just change the name of the teams.

November 6, 2000

Early estimates of the No Mercy PPV on 10/22 for the first match back of Steve Austin appear in the range of a 1.35 buy rate, which would be 525,000 to 550,000 buys. Unforgiven looks to be settling in at around 570,000 buys, so there is a slight decrease. The decrease can legitimately be attributed to competing against the World Series. In the strong New York market, No Mercy was down 30% from the previous PPV, while No Mercy was actually at the same level or up in most of the rest of the country. The WWF share of the PPV revenue would be in the \$6.76 million range. The PPV drew more buys than the Tyson-Golota fight that same weekend, but less money because of the higher price for the boxing show, as the promoters' share of the boxing PPV revenue was about \$9.67 million.

For whatever this is worth as a comparison point for the No Mercy number when it comes out, the Mike Tyson-Andrew Golota fight two days earlier did a 1.25 buy rate (450,000 buys) which is right in the neighborhood of what a typical WWF PPV these days averages, although since the price is higher (\$49.95), it grossed more than any pro wrestling PPV this year except Wrestlemania. Within the boxing community, the number threw a giant scare, because Tyson had never drawn less than 700,000 buys on PPV before

December 11, 2000

The earliest projections for Survivor Series are a 1.0 buy rate, or 400,000 buys. This was the first "normal" buy rate for a WWF PPV show since Austin's return and be among the lowest if not the lowest of the year. Since both Survivor Series and SummerSlam drew less buys than "non-major" shows before and after, it shows that with the exception of Wrestlemania and perhaps Royal Rumble, there is no longer any regard for "name" when it comes to the casual fan buying a show and they buy based on what the money match is. The fact Austin vs. HHH was way down from the previous several events speaks either for that match and how "over" the car angle really was, or the popularity of wrestling declining. You never know, but one would think the next one may not do any better. Last year's six-way for the title drew the second lowest buy rate of 1999. I guess they are counting on the sex appeal of "Hell in a Cell" to make up for the lack of a focused main event.

December 18, 2000

For a comparison, the Trinidad-Vargas fight on 12/2 did about a 1.46 buy rate (585,000 buys), which is well above what the WWF PPV show on 12/10 is expected to do and what the previous two did. Both SummerSlam and Unforgiven were in the same ballpark when it came to buys, but because the boxing match was \$49.95 list, it generated more money than any WWF PPV this year except for Mania.

January 1, 2001

Early estimates have Armageddon doing about a 1.15 buy rate (current estimate is 465,000 buys), which is about a \$5.99 million company gross. Those numbers are up a little from the previous show. It's a better number than I'd have expected and probably has to be chalked up to the job they did selling the Hell in a Cell as a concept, and given how well it was executed and followed up on, it probably means that next year the match should also do a strong number

The actual PPV numbers, as opposed to the estimated numbers that we get usually about a week after the event that usually are close, are that the September PPV ended up at 625,000 buys, October ended up at 500,000, Survivor Series was down to 400,000 which was a disappointment. At this point Armageddon will end up above projections (I believe they project in the range of 400,000 buys for a non-big name PPV and more than that for the big ones with traditional names, although as this year has shown, Wrestlemania and Royal Rumble as names mean something but the rest of the shows draw based on the main event and not the name or history of the show. Survivor Series based on the company's budgetary projections created an economic shortfall but that is more than taken care of by how much the September and October shows did over projections)

February 5, 2001

No Rumble buy rate available at press time. It's pretty clear WWF officials were upset that the new management of In Demand has become even slower than the previous management when it comes to giving them preliminary or accurate estimates of how the PPV shows do.

Speaking of Mania, the show is scheduled for a four-hour block as opposed to the usual three-hour block for all the other wrestling PPV's and will be higher priced as well. The card itself is nowhere near being finalized, but the belief is that the show will probably be extended, with more and longer matches so the wrestling portion will be between three and three-and-a-half hours. They'll also have a post-game show, although not a one hour one like they had last year which was considered too long. There will be no all-day ticket like last year where they did a 12-hour version for \$49.95 which contained highlights and storylines (many of which were fictionalized) covering all the previous Manias. It was a big success in that last year's show generated more revenue than any wrestling show in history and a lot of people ordered the all-day, but it is too early to do the same gimmick as last year as the history has already been done and most people who would be interested in that already ordered it. It wouldn't be a bad idea to alternate starting next year with a history package for Rumble, Mania, King of the Ring, SummerSlam and Survivor Series (can't wait for that one, huh?), each every fifth year so there will be a turnaround of fans and enough new history between

February 12, 2001

The Royal Rumble is expected to come in slightly lower than last year. At this point the estimate is 568,000 buys, which is a 1.35 buy rate. Last year ended up doing 640,000 buys (1.60), and the hope is when everything is counted up, this year can come close to that number.

February 19, 2001

For the year 2000, PPV was up from a 1.25 average buy rate to a 1.34 average buy rate, a 7% increase. Considering that Royal Rumble, traditionally the second best PPV draw of the year (last year it was third as the Austin at return at Backlash beat it out), only did a 1.35, it is very likely that number isn't going to hold this year.

March 5, 2001

There is no PPV show on 3/11 and at this point, barring something unforeseen, there is no ECW.

March 12, 2001

-Last word we heard, and this could change, is that Viewers Choice Canada on 3/11 in the ECW PPV time slot was planning on showing a rerun of the January PPV.

-Bischoff is said to hate the new WCW PPV names that were done during his absence like Sin and Greed. The May PPV will be called "The Big Bang," which I guess means the explosion which starts the new universe

March 19, 2001

-Preliminary estimates have No Way Out doing a 1.31 buy rate (550,000 buys) which is only slightly down from Royal Rumble. This is a lot better figure than I would have thought since everyone pretty much knew it was just a show to set up Mania and the last time Austin vs. HHH was the main event (Survivor Series), it drew the lowest buy rate of the entire year.

Both In Demand in the U.S. and Viewers Choice Canada on 3/11 ran a replay of the January Guilty as Charged PPV for \$21.95 in place of the canceled Living Dangerously show. It wasn't until 3/7 that ECW officially announced cancellation of the show, although it had been known for several weeks that no show was going to take place.

March 26, 2001

Viewers Choice Canada was furious as nobody from WCW ever let them know that they had canceled the 4/15 PPV date, even though it was cancelled weeks ago.

April 9, 2001

Wrestlemania X-Seven, in almost every way, was the culmination of the wrestling boom... Even preliminary PPV figures aren't available at press time. The all-time record of 824,000 was set last year at Wrestlemania for the HHH vs. Rock vs. Mick Foley vs. Big Show four-way match on April 2, 2000. This show was thought to have a good shot at beating that record. The total PPV gross record was also set with that show of an estimated \$31.32 million. WWFE's are of that would be about 42% after the cable companies and In Demand take their first cut or about \$13.15 million. Because the price was raised this year from \$34.95 to \$39.95, even taking into account that a lot of people last year paid \$49.95 and got an all-day package, this year's show would have to have 784,000 orders to become the biggest grossing pro wrestling and biggest non-boxing PPV event in history. The largest PPV buy rate was approximately 8.0 percent, done twice, for the Hogan vs. Andre Wrestlemania and a Japanese buy rate of approximately the same for the Rickson Gracie vs. Nobuhiko Takada match on October 11, 1997. This show, nor will any show in history due to the maturity of the PPV industry, ever approach that figure.

April 16, 2001

While there are no final figures in, there is little doubt that Wrestlemania X-Seven from 4/1 at the Reliant Astrodome in Houston was the biggest revenue producing event in the history of pro wrestling. At press time there was no estimate regarding PPV internally sent out within Titan Sports, but the earliest company projections show a major increase over last year's record breaking 824,000 buys. The latest projections by the company were in the neighborhood of a 2.4 percent buy rate and one million total buys, which cable industry sources indicate a similar range. From a buy rate standpoint, it would be the best buy rate a pro wrestling PPV show has done in the U.S. since SummerSlam of 1991, at a time when PPV was still in its infancy, fewer homes were hooked up, and buy rates across the board were far larger. If those numbers were to hold up, the total PPV gross for the event would be in the range of \$40 million (\$39.95 list

price), and with the like gate and merchandise it would put the total take for the event, not including international television rights, at \$44.6 million, destroying the record of \$31.32 million set at last year's Mania. WWFE's portion of that revenue would be significantly lower, but WWFE's final take on PPV should be in the neighborhood of \$16.8 million.

In a review of the PPV industry for the January through March period, the two WWF PPV shows, as expected, were the two largest grossing PPVs of any kind. Pro wrestling, and this is largely WWF although there was the final ECW show and the last three WCW shows that figured into this time frame, grossed \$52.4 million, which was 84 percent of the total event PPV revenue. This shows just how much leverage, with the end of ECW and WCW, that WWFE has in the PPV world. WCW's January Sin show finished fourth overall, which shows how much of a one person race it was, with the Evander Holyfield vs. John Ruiz fight finishing third with only about 150,000 buys. Rumble ended up doing about 550,000 buys and No Way Out did numbers in that same ballpark (final figures aren't official for that show). The Drew Carrey PPV, which was heavily pushed during the Rumble, ended up doing 48,000 buys.

April 23, 2001

A couple of more updates on Wrestlemania X-Seven when it comes to record breaking figures. The latest estimates as it regards PPV are a 2.15 buy rate and about 900,000 buys. That is also still a preliminary estimate. That would still be, by far, the largest non-boxing PPV show in history and revise the total gross for the event from PPV, live event and merchandise to approximately \$40.6 million.

May 21, 2001

-The 7/22 WWF PPV has had its name changed from Fully Loaded to Invasion. The name change is because the former WCW wrestlers at this point are scheduled to appear in some form.

-On the ECW piece in last week's issue, a major reason why income declined in 2000 from 1999 is because In Demand was slow in paying PPV revenue. In Demand, by their own records, still owes ECW \$800,000 for the year 1999 and significantly more for the year 2000. However, it i

June 11, 2001

The preliminary estimates for Judgment Day are that the show did a 1.13 buy rate which is about 485,000 buys. The number is a surprising success considering every other economic indicator for WWF business was down and the line-up going in seemed uninspired and largely thrown together. It's a significant increase over Backlash despite only a three-week time period between shows.

July 16, 2001

Early estimates on King of the Ring are a 1.05 percent buy rate, which would be about 450,000 buys.

Wrestlemania as a final number was the all-time record for a pro wrestling PPV with the final figure appearing to be around 900,000 buys, which is about 10% less than the last reported estimate. There are no final numbers in for any PPV's since Mania.

July 23, 2001

WWFE filed a \$1.7 million lawsuit against 30 Canadian bars and restaurants that they claim are illegally showing their PPV events. The WWF does allow establishments to air its PPV events, but only upon payment of a rights fee, and has a contract with Famous Players big-screen theaters. WWF had investigated locations in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary and London that used either a phony digital card or an illegal black box to order the events as if they were a private residence. Most of the establishments sued had done it three times. The WWF hired the firm Crawford, McKenzie, McLean & Wilford, which won \$100,000 from Niagara Falls, ONT area bars which illegally aired blacked out Buffalo Bills games during the 1999 season.

August 6, 2001

It is also worth noting that the company's contract with DirecTV, which has about eight million PPV subscribers, ends effective with the SummerSlam PPV and the two companies have not come to terms for a renewal. If DirecTV pulls out, and somehow I don't think this will happen, but WWF is no doubt trying to exercise as much leverage as possible because they are the dominant PPV brand, it would likely drop overall PPV buys by a significant percentage. It's doubtful the percentage would be as high as the 17 percent of the universe it represents even though DirecTV does better than the national average for WWF programming because many of the viewers, if they wouldn't be able to get WWF programming, would switch to a system that does, and there is an overlap of viewers who get both satellite and cable, and they would simply switch to ordering it by cable.

August 13, 2001

The Invasion PPV on 7/22 in Cleveland, based on preliminary reports, looks to have done a 1.6 buy rate. With the ever-expanding PPV universe, it would be 750,000 buys, making it, if these numbers hold up, the fourth most purchased pro wrestling PPV in history, trailing only the past three Wrestlemanias. SummerSlam, which is being far more heavily promoted within the cable industry because of the belief the return of the Rock (who did both his first TV appearance and match on Raw the past two weeks) will lead to another large number. It's pretty clear the Invasion number was drawn both based on the interpromotional aspect, this being the first big event, as well as the tease of the return of the old Stone Cold, which no matter what TV and movie executives think of Rock, it is Austin, well at least the old Austin, who has always been the bigger PPV draw.

The latest SET PPV survey for the months of April through June showed that WWF events garnered 65 percent of all PPV revenue and its four shows in the quarter, led by Mania, were the top four grossing shows. What was interesting about the independent list is that after Wrestlemania, which by leaps and bounds was the biggest show of the quarter, the order of the four WWF events were King of the Ring (Austin vs. Jericho vs. Benoit), Backlash (Undertaker & Kane vs. HHH & Austin) and Judgment Day (Austin vs. Undertaker). Figures for the individual shows weren't released but they are in a different order than WWF preliminary numbers on those shows and tell a very interesting story since the plug was pulled on the KOR main event a few weeks in because of the feeling Jericho and Benoit weren't main eventers, yet their angle with Austin drew more money than the angles with the established main eventers. This negotiation with DirecTV is going to prove to be very interesting, with WWF attempting to get a bigger cut of the overall pie (their cut is now about 42%). At various times in the past, WWF has attempted to rework the deal more in their favor but they've never had the leverage, with boxing down and no other wrestling competitors, like they have now

August 20, 2001

As you can imagine, DirecTV and WWF are in serious negotiations about continuing their current deal with no interruption. Their agreement, which is a continuation of an agreement that expired some time back, expires after SummerSlam

The 750,000 early estimate for buys for Invasion has not even been circulated among the top management in WWF. Usually the top management gets an e-mail of an estimated figure about a week after the show, a number which often turns out to be quite a bit off the estimates after three months which they do the payoffs based on. The only thing anyone has been told seems to be that the show did great.

August 27, 2001

It appears that the WWF will, barring a resolution of their problems, not air PPV events on DirecTV. The two sides had been working under terms of a contract that had expired last December, and the final extension ended with SummerSlam. Besides working without a new deal, both sides have been at an impasse over an interpretation of a contract clause which has to do with a significant amount of money. DirecTV had taken the dispute to arbitration, which is what the contract calls for in the event of a contractual dispute. What this dispute is exactly about is unknown because the contract also calls for neither side to be able to discuss matters going to arbitration publicly. WWF was so upset over being taken to arbitration that on 8/17, they sent out word that SummerSlam would be the last WWF event televised on DirecTV, without letting DirecTV know of its plans. WWF began contacting affiliates to let them know that Unforgiven would not air on DirecTV. If there is a time to make a power play for a better deal, this is it, as mentioned before. WWF has never been more dominant in the PPV world, with boxing having a bad year and all the other serious wrestling organizations having closed up shop. The PPV universe right now is 47.5 million homes in North America. DirecTV is believed to reach at least eight to ten million homes, but many of those homes also have basic cable, but

conversely, homes that have DirecTV buy PPV events as a higher proportion than homes who have cable. Many of those people could always, if they don't have basic cable, order the show at a friends' house if they really wanted to see it, but people congregating together would also lower the number of buys. It will do more damage to a lackluster line-up, where people wouldn't be willing to go through some inconvenience to see the show, than a strong line-up where people will make that effort. Some of this also may be posturing by WWF, as in 1988-89 they made a similar power play, threatening to pull Wrestlemania V from PPV because they were trying to cut a better deal, as I can remember Jesse Ventura complaining about it being un-American what was going on (which was just free enterprise taking its normal course of battling for every last dollar), but at the end, with the cable companies asking WCW to put on a show that same day as leverage, WWF backed down, WCW got screwed by the people who asked them to put the show on and ended up putting it on for free on TBS (which was the famous 56:00 Flair-Steamboat match from New Orleans that some would say was the best match of the entire decade) and Wrestlemania aired. Jim Ross mentioned on the PPV twice that DirecTV wouldn't be carrying any future PPVs as a way to make sure it becomes a public issue immediately. DirecTV this week was still telling people as late as the day of the show it was carrying the 9/23 Unforgiven show, and because of the amount of money at stake, it is in everyone's interest to settle this before that show. If DirecTV doesn't carry the next show, it would be out an estimated \$1.35 million based on an average buy rate (or slightly more when you throw in the Fanatix series) for an average month. If DirecTV had not carried last month's show, which did a well above average buy rate, DirecTV would have been out \$1.8 million and WWF would have been out a number that may have come close to that same figure. For the future, WWF would be out a similar amount (minus whatever pick-up it gets from cable or other dish services if their customers switch over as it regards people who ordered on DirecTV usually). These are huge stakes to not resolve the issue, as those numbers are a significant part of both company's PPV budget, and would be out that every month until a deal is made. The figures in dispute over are unknown, but it's doubtful they would make up for either side losing even a month or two of PPV revenue.

September 3, 2001

Invasion, which is now estimated at doing 681,000 buys (1.43 buy rate), slightly down from the projections of two weeks ago but still putting it in the top ten PPVs in pro wrestling history (trailing the last four Wrestlemanias, a couple of Royal Rumbles, an Undertaker vs. Austin SummerSlam with a summer-long build-up and nothing else) when it comes to total buys and total revenue (\$20,396,000 of which the WWF share would be about \$8.77 million, about 10 percent lower than original estimates that were used in last week's Observer's business figures). The event nearly doubled what WWF had averaged on its previous three PPVs since business fell after Wrestlemania, none of which came close to previously estimated 1.0 percent buy rate. As it turns out, the latest estimates are that Judgment Day (Austin vs. Undertaker) only did an 0.74 buy rate, the lowest buy rate for a WWF event dating back to the Steve Austin vs. Dude Love main event on May 31, 1998 for "Over the Edge" from Milwaukee. King of the Ring (Austin vs. Benoit vs. Jericho) did an 0.84 buy rate, which was the strongest of the three post-Mania shows even though Austin was working with people perceived as less of drawing cards (Benoit

& Jericho vs. HHH & Undertaker & Kane as main eventers) and even though it was the first PPV main event in WWF history that Vince McMahon basically pulled the plug on and gave up on the match a few weeks before it even took place.

In the investors meeting headed by Linda McMahon and WWFE CFO Augie Liquori, when asked about the DirecTV dispute, they said DirecTV is taking them to arbitration over a charge of fraud, but didn't detail more than that. The gist of the DirecTV/WWFE dispute appears to be over about five to seven percent of the revenue from recent events, which adds up to quite a bit of money. On cable, the cable companies and the event promoter split the revenue and In Demand takes out a percentage as the channel. Since DirecTV does its own channel and doesn't go through In Demand, they believe they are also entitled to that percentage and WWF feels otherwise. Linda McMahon talked about expecting large increases in revenues over the next few quarters because they were going to promote more PPV events outside of North America, and the plan still is to eventually increase to two PPV events in North America per month through taking WCW, or whatever name ends up being used for the project, as a separate entity. Linda McMahon stated, as mentioned here previously, that there is no specific plan over when WCW would be broken off into a separate promotion other than she expected it to take place in the first three months of 2002.

Multichannel News ran a story by R. Thomas Umstead about the WWF/DirecTV situation. It discussed how In Demand is saying they aren't going to do anything special in promotion of Unforgiven to call attention to the fact for most people, the only way to get the show would be through their cable company and In Demand is the middle man. The company said it won't increase its marketing efforts to change promotional strategy, saying that while they enjoy their relationship with WWF, they don't want to become involved in the dispute. It said that one major cable MSO, TVN Entertainment, said they would publicize the WWF/DirecTV impasse although still not changing marketing plans. WWF itself said, because it's only three weeks before Unforgiven, they also wouldn't have a marketing plan calling attention to it for this show but said they could for future shows. WWF's position now is that they won't even negotiate the new contract until DirecTV drops its taking the company to arbitration over the financial dispute.

October 1, 2001

Just days before the Unforgiven show, WWF and DirecTV reached an agreement for one show to continue under the old agreement while they continue to negotiate a new deal. It was said this was a one show thing, but it made clear that when push comes to shove, and with anywhere from \$800,000 to \$1.3 million at stake for both sides by not carrying the show, that this is not the time (nor is any time a good time) to be passing up that kind of revenue each month over a few percentage points or a contract interpretation going to arbitration. Certainly the company needs a more focused build-up to these shows and in particular the main event, which come across as, except for the top few matches, shows put together a week before the show. What, if any affect, the economic situation has is unknown and it may even be a short-term issue for WWF, a company with a long-term future.

October 8, 2001

The December PPV, formerly called Armageddon, will now be called Payback.

October 15, 2001

Among numerous names suggested for the December PPV when they dropped the Armageddon name was Starrcade, but Vince McMahon didn't like that name

October 22, 2001

Coming on the heels of last month, where it was said for weeks that the Unforgiven PPV wouldn't be on DirecTV due to their dispute, only to have a make-up days before, it was announced on Raw on 10/15 that No Mercy wouldn't be on DirecTV. Whether this is a last minute bluff and WWF will change its tune at the last minute, as it has in previous attempted power plays both last month and in 1989, or go through with it will be determined over the next few days. We're told this one is a very serious showdown. It is said to be a fight over the revenue split. While neither side would comment on the specifics of the percentage points in question, it is believed by others who have produced PPV wrestling events that the original DirecTV-WWF split in the old deal was a 50/50 split, where each side would get \$14.97 on a PPV show. There was a dispute over that cut as DirecTV believed they were entitled to 60 percent and based on the contract because they provided the channel similar to In Demand, as well as functioned as the cable service. They filed for binding arbitration to settle the difference which would be over a significant amount of money for the time frame in question. The contract they were disputing expired in January and both sides had continued to work together in lieu of a decision, although WWF had threatened to pull its PPVs unless DirecTV dropped its legal claim. These figures listed are what could at best be called guesstimates as to what the problems between the sides are. DirecTV, if the figures are correct, under their terms would now get \$17.97 and WWF get \$11.98 from every PPV order under the current contract. This would leave WWF getting the same 40% of total gross that it gets in its contract with cable companies. It is believed WWF is attempting to retain the previous 50/50 split and that DirecTV offered a compromise offer, which may have been a 55/45 or something along those lines. The amount of revenue they are fighting over would represent about \$90,000 per month based on about 60,000 DirecTV buys, which would be a little bit below the recent average, but average these days is getting worse. Theoretically, for every month WWF doesn't air on DirecTV, it would take them about ten months if DirecTV backs down, to make up for the lost revenue. If DirecTV doesn't back down, WWF would be out \$800,000 to \$1 million per month in revenue for a typical show and as much as \$1.5 million for a hit show like Invasion, they would never be able to recoup since DirecTV represents about 15 percent of the company's PPV business, although many DirecTV homes do also have cable, so the loss may be slightly less than that. The downside is that at a time when interest is declining at a scary rate, putting a solid percentage of your loyal PPV audience in a position where they can't see the show may get them out of the habit of getting it and lead to lesser buys if and when an agreement is reached. Of course, DirecTV would be hurt equally in both facets if it doesn't back down, so both sides have

basically the same to lose by not reaching an 11th hour agreement like they did last month. The current breakdown on cable is that WWF gets \$11.98, the local cable company gets \$14.97 and In Demand gets \$3 out of every order. DirecTV's argument appears to be that since it controls its PPV channels, it believes it is entitled to both the fee the cable company would get as well as the fee the station itself gets, feeling WWF is already working with cable under the same split and their compromise was a better split than WWF already works under elsewhere. However, WWF doesn't have the power to fight the cable industry and In Demand, even though it may want to, because losing the cable industry on taking a hardline stand would cost the company about \$4 million per month, which is a figure they can't afford to fight over, particularly since the cable industry as a whole could afford the hit far more easily than WWF. The companies have been working together without a contract since January. WWF had already stopped running its Fanatix series events on DirecTV last month, and DirecTV has begun producing old tapes for PPV at \$9.95 of both AWA events and other old events hosted by Gene Okerlund to attempt to fill the void, but there is virtually no market today except a very small specialized market for pro wrestling going back that far. It will try a new avenue on 12/2 with a taped show of hardcore videos from various Japanese extreme promotions hosted by Joel Gertner and Missy Hyatt.

December PPV was renamed Vengeance instead of Payback, which replaces Armageddon. Someone registered the domain name wwfpayback.com and I think they just said screw it

October 29, 2001

A bigger issue than the content of the No Mercy show was the DirecTV issue. Neither side backed down at the end, and most DirecTV subscribers had no access to the show. Our response, which is usually a pretty good indicator of a good or bad buy rate, was on the low end. As it turned out, many DirecTV subscribers with illegal access cards were able to view the show for free, since DirecTV and WWF did agree to fulfill certain contracts with establishments that had ordered the shows in a one year package from DirecTV and that feed was put on Ch. 592. Not sure if this is related or not, but on the Dish Network, like with DirecTV, if you order a PPV, you typically get the replay for free, however this time that wasn't the case. At the last minute, WWF announced a live webcast of the show as a \$15 PPV. Most reports we got said it was a disaster. The server crashed during the first two matches. One report we got is that with a 300K stream, the quality wasn't bad, but with a lesser powered computer, it was not a pleasant experience. As it turned out, about an hour before the show, only 500 orders had been placed. UFC tried this more than a year ago when it had little PPV penetration, looking at internet webcasting as a way to bypass cable and open up a new market and they only did 1,000 orders so it's just not something masses are ready for.

Another factor which may be getting in the way of DirecTV closing a deal with WWF is that DirecTV is on the verge of being sold, either to rival EchoStar or News Corporation (Fox). News Corp. already owns the various Sky PPV outlets in countries like Japan, United Kingdom and Mexico which runs the PPV events in those countries

November 5, 2001

Pending regulatory approval, the sale of DirecTV to rival satellite provider EchoStar was completed on 10/28. The story had many potential ramifications to wrestling and wrestling fans even more than the obvious, which is the WWF's contract dispute with DirecTV which wound up with No Mercy not airing and costing both sides an estimated \$800,000. The WWF has a deal in place with EchoStar, which will become the name of the company that will have a virtual monopoly on the home satellite dish business. It's double bad news for WWF, as its deal in place with EchoStar was more financially disadvantageous to them than the deal DirecTV had offered last week that WWF turned down. Second, with EchoStar controlling virtually the entire satellite market, it will feel far less pressure to negotiate a better deal with WWF than with the old system, where WWF could advise its fans to switch dish operators and play one against the other. Basically, in hindsight, the WWF pissed away \$800,000 or so last week and ended up with nothing in return and probably a worse deal than they would have had, but hindsight is always 20/20 and they, like everyone, was figuring DirecTV was being sold to News Corp. The combined company would represent a whopping 35 percent of the potential PPV homes and dish consumers traditionally purchase PPVs at a higher rate than cable consumers, so any pullout of a show or shows to pressure a more beneficial rate would be disastrous. For potential monopolistic reasons, regulatory approval of this deal is hardly a rubber stamp and will get much opposition. Some are suggesting it could hold up the actual sale as much as one year even if approved. News Corporation (Rupert Murdoch's company) withdrew its offer the previous day. The only roadblock to the purchase for \$25.8 billion in both cash and stock is whether or not regulators would allow a deal where one company controls so much, in fact virtually all, of the home satellite business. Since News Corporation owns the Sky PPV channels, which are huge internationally (Europe, Japan, Asia, Australia, Mexico), it's purchase of DirecTV was thought to potentially start a deal where it could control a lot of PPV's worldwide and eventually lead to not only more distribution of American wrestling PPV events in many foreign markets, but eventual distribution of both Japanese and Mexican events into the U.S. market. There was even preliminary discussions a few months back if this deal had gone through of starting a wrestling promotion of their own because of access to worldwide, instead of largely just U.S. and Canadian revenue funding the PPV events as they do now. But that is now out the window. News Corp. was expecting that Hughes Electronics (which has lost \$481.6 million between January and the end of September), the parent company of DirecTV, would approve the sale over the weekend.

SummerSlam PPV (Austin vs. Angle, Rock vs. Booker) built around the return of the Rock to PPV did about 500,000 buys or a 1.05 buy rate. That's down significantly from last year. In hindsight, Rock's first match should have been saved for PPV, because clearly you only get one chance to make that first match pop. They played it a lot smarter when Austin returned and his first live appearance was on PPV, then the next month his first match was on PPV, and they did two huge buy rates in the process

WWF offered full refunds to customers that complained about the No Mercy webcast. They ended up with just under 1,000 orders. WWF started offering refunds on 10/22, but the next day sent out an e-mail saying that anyone who ordered could watch a video stream through 10/24.

The video stream replay didn't have any real problems and people who got to see the show on the replay were still given refunds.

November 19, 2001

Linda McMahon this past week had stated that due to DirecTV's dealings with its proposed sale to EchoStar, that she didn't expect further negotiations. At press time the Survivor Series would be the second WWF PPV event not shown on DirecTV, and on the 11/12 Raw, Jim Ross once again mentioned that fact. Maybe I'm totally naive on this subject, but I can't believe with that kind of money, that neither side can replace, on the line, that an agreement couldn't be put together temporarily as it had been all year to work under the terms of the previous contract until a new deal is signed.

November 26, 2001

PPV dropped 21.6% from the previous quarter, due to a combination of the huge Invasion show the previous quarter and to a much lesser extent, the effect of the DirecTV loss for the No Mercy PPV, but mainly just a decline in the product. Actual PPV numbers for the last quarter were 527,000 buys for SummerSlam, which worked out to a 1.11 buy rate for a show headlined by Rock's return against Booker T and Austin vs. Angle. They did 350,000 buys (0.74 buy rate) for Unforgiven, headlined by Austin vs. Angle and Rock vs. Booker & Shane handicap match. They are estimating 305,000 buys (0.80 buy rate--higher buy rate with fewer buys due to no DirecTV) for No Mercy, headlined by Austin vs. Angle vs. Van Dam and Rock vs. Jericho. Keep in mind a show that recent, the estimates historically at this point wind up being much higher than the final numbers come in (usually by about ten percent) so it would be no surprise if that show wound up doing a lower buy rate than Unforgiven. The Unforgiven buy rate would have tied the Judgment Day buy rate earlier in the year (Austin vs. Undertaker) as the company's lowest PPV buy rate dating back to an Austin vs. Dude Love match on May 31, 1998 at the Over the Edge PPV in Milwaukee. The actual amount of revenue lost by DirecTV not carrying No Mercy, if we're assuming the current estimate is accurate, would be somewhere between \$630,000 if you figure it would have done the same buy rate as the previous show, and \$900,000 if you figure that nobody with access to DirecTV had cable and ordered it from another source and the buy rate would have held at the same level. The reality is likely somewhere between those two figures, but, due to the overall lessening of interest in WWF, well below the \$1 million to \$1.3 million per month they were expecting to lose. That sounds like a good thing that they didn't lose as much as expected, but it really, a bad thing. The SummerSlam buy rate was the lowest for that show since 1997 for the famous Bret Hart title win over Undertaker (0.80) with Shawn Michaels as referee hitting Undertaker with a chair that was the set up for the famous Survivor Series match.

January 28, 2002

The reason most of the sports bars that used to show WWF PPVs didn't show Rumble is because the sports bars did so under contract with DirecTV in almost all cases. WWF allowed

DirecTV to air the shows on Ch. 592 (a station most subscribers don't have access to unless they have an illegal hacker card) over the past few months because of the existing bar contract. Those contracts expired after the Vengeance show

February 4, 2002

Like last year, Wrestlemania is scheduled for a four-hour PPV window, most likely meaning a 30 minute pre-game show at 7:30 p.m. and a live PPV from 8-11:15 p.m

February 11, 2002

Regarding Wrestlemania, the decision has been made that it will last until about 11:45 p.m. and not 11:15 p.m. as listed here last week

February 18, 2002

The World Wrestling Federation and DirecTV temporarily ended their dispute on 2/7 over PPV revenue which will result in PPVs starting with the 2/17 No Way Out being broadcast both on DirecTV systems as well as in many sports bars that got the signal through DirecTV. At press time, there were still final terms being worked out on a long-term deal. The agreement will keep the WWF events on DirecTV at least through the proposed DirecTV/EchoStar merger. It isn't known the settlement terms on the deal, but it behooved both sides to cut a deal immediately because both sides would be leaving millions on the table just from the next two events. The two sides had been having problems ever since DirecTV took WWF to binding arbitration, as their existing contract stated over any dispute, over revenues from 2000. The basic argument remains unresolved. While nobody has officially stated these numbers, they are believed to be very close. The original WWF-DirecTV split would see each group getting a 50/50 split, or about \$14.97 per PPV order. DirecTV believed they were entitled to 60 percent of the revenue, because they both provided the PPV channel and acted as the cable company. WWF's deal with the cable industry is that they receive approximately 40 percent of the revenue, or \$11.98 per order, with \$14.97 going to the cable company and the remaining \$2.99 going to InDemand, the channel which the shows air on. DirecTV claimed contractually they were entitled to not only the 50 percent they had received from 2000, but an additional 10 percent for supplying the channel. WWF has on different occasions attempted to figure out a way to remove InDemand from the equation, not just because of their cut, but because they take so much time to get back with reliable data of buys. In a business like pro wrestling where decisions have to be made based on marketability, and the leading source of income, particularly that varies greatly due to storylines and match-ups, is PPV, not having access to true numbers until three months later, hampers the ability to make marketing and main event decisions. By not getting anything close to accurate info on how the PPV shows do, it makes it impossible to know if a storyline is doing better or worse than TV ratings would indicate, because the emotion to get a casual fan to tune in out of curiosity and the emotion that makes them spend \$30 or more to see a match are not the same thing. For UFC, it was even worse, because they literally had no idea of how well their shows did and are doing, similar to ECW during its existence, and whether they are successes

of failures and to budget future shows, until months down the line. For even more minor players with less money cushion, this info coming late creates even more business problems. The dispute was brewing all of last year. Both sides have worked together for most of 2001 without a contract under the terms of the previous agreement. It came to a head on 10/15 when WWF pulled the No Mercy show from DirecTV in an attempt to get DirecTV to come back with closer to a 50-50 split going forward. It is believed DirecTV offered either a 57-43 or a 55-45 split in their favor, which was actually a better deal than the 60-40 deal WWF was getting from the cable industry. WWF attempted to pressure into a 50-50 by not accepting the terms and, right before No Mercy, pulling out, figuring DirecTV would get barraged by unhappy subscribers by not carrying a major event. WWF couldn't pull the same power play with the cable industry to better its terms, because a pull-out of cable would cripple the shows. As it was, since DirecTV was generally responsible for about 18 percent of WWF's PPV business, their revenues were likely down significantly on the past four shows. While figures for the past four PPV shows aren't available, it is believed that No Mercy overall did poorly by WWF standards (which means great by anyone else's standards), that Survivor Series did well, that Vengeance did about the recent average and that Royal Rumble did well above average. It could be reasonably estimated that WWF has lost \$4.4 million, most of it pure profit. If you figure on the percentage that goes to the wrestlers, collective wrestler earnings were also down between \$530,000 and \$660,000 from PPV revenues from that period. DirecTV has lost about \$5.4 million over the past four months in this stalemate using the terms DirecTV had put on the table. Both sides have lost millions in a dispute over what basically amounts to \$120,000 per month. Since the WWF has just increased its PPV price from \$29.95 to \$34.95, the new price starting with the April Backlash show more than makes up the difference. From a timing standpoint, settling was far more imperative now to WWF with Wrestlemania upcoming. Under what were the last DirecTV terms, WWF would now earn between \$15.03 and \$15.72 per PPV buy, an increase over the \$14.97 per buy they would have earned under the old system had DirecTV backed down on its demands. However, we're told even with the price increase in April, as things stand now, and they are subject to change on a moments notice, WWF has not agreed to allow DirecTV to carry any PPV events after Wrestlemania. With WWF believing that whatever pop the return of Hulk Hogan, Kevin Nash and Scott Hall would be causing would start at No Way Out, and with Wrestlemania, its biggest show of the year, looming, it certainly behooved WWF to make a settlement now. DirecTV also had pressure, likely from subscribers who were wrestling fans who didn't understand the nature of the deadlock and just wanted to see WWF PPV events, but not as much because the movie channel PPV revenues have increased greatly of late and have more than made up for the losses in both boxing and wrestling over the past year. It was imperative that WWF settled before Mania, because the loss of DirecTV revenue, even under the terms DirecTV had laid out, for this year if the show had done close to the same business as last year's Rock vs. Austin show did, would have been \$3 million on just that day alone.

March 4, 2002

Linda McMahon at the third quarter investment conference on 2/21 did note that DirecTV had informed them that on DTV alone, they had 100,000 buys for No Way Out, which would be a 1.1 buy rate on their service. If that were to hold up in the cable industry, and usually it doesn't as

people with dishes buy PPV's at a greater clip than those who have cable, it would work out to 522,000 buys. Based on recent averages for non-major shows, that would indicate the first-day NWO return to have been worth \$1.46 million, which comes close to paying for Hall & Nash's salary for the year. Of course, most likely, the real numbers will come up shy of that. This largely destroys the argument that the original Alliance couldn't have succeeded due to the lack of star power, as their first PPV drew 681,000 buys with the so-called less star power. The most notable thing said was that the DirecTV deal signed a few weeks back was for 18 months, expiring in August of 2003. The terms signed for were identical to the terms both sides had been working under all of 2001 before WWF pulled the shows, which means WWF gained no terms advantage while losing an estimated \$4.4 million in revenue. The contract will also be nullified if a merger with EchoStar takes place before that period of time, or if the merger never happens, the contract again will be nullified, so it's really a contract terms until the DirecTV situation with ownership is finalized. Also, the previous plans talked about for doing 24 PPV events per year have been phased back to doing 16, but with the price increase per event from \$29.95 to \$34.95. It appears that the first month that will have two PPVs will be August, with both the traditional SummerSlam, a second PPV on 8/10 coming from a 60,000-seat Domed stadium in Melbourne, Australia. The months with two shows will be laid out every three months, so again in November and February. It is unclear if the new shows will all be international, and this is just making the formerly U.K. only PPV events available on a same day tape delay to the U.S. The PPV events will include both the Raw and Smackdown crew, but the plan for international touring would only involve the Smackdown crew in most cases. It isn't clear if the Raw crew would also be involved on international PPV events.

The company's share of PPV events for the 3rd quarter was \$23.8 million, actually up from \$23.7 million the previous year and \$22.2 million the prior quarter. This is even with the losing of DirecTV. A lot of this is due to an increase in international PPV revenue as well as merchandise more shows like fanatix series. The August through October quarter was a disappointment, while November through January includes traditional big events Survivor Series and Royal Rumble, both of which should have done well even without DirecTV. In addition, the December Vengeance show featured a tournament to determine the first undisputed world champion, so was a stronger card than most non-major events. There is no breakdown available other than those three events are believed to have done 1.4 million total buys. Last year's Survivor Series was a flop by major show standards, so the increase this year likely spelled a difference and most likely December and January were probably a little down from last year's numbers, probably attributable to DirecTV.

March 25, 2002

While the \$5 price increase per PPV show starting in a few weeks doesn't seem like much, over the course of a year, it should increase company revenue by \$800,000 per month, most of it being pure profit. The last time the WWF was in a severe financial crisis, which was 1997, they raised the prices of what used to be the secondary PPVs from \$19.95 to \$29.95 and that added revenue took them out of the whole and into profitability all by itself

April 8, 2002

There are early reports, unconfirmed, that Mania broke all existing pro wrestling PPV records. Even if it came close to Rock vs. Austin last year, the record setter at 950,000 buys, that would have to be considered a gigantic success because overall wrestling was at a lower popularity level this year

May 6, 2002

There have been no internal estimates regarding the buys for Wrestlemania, so it is not definite yet that they broke the Austin vs. Rock record, even with far more money spent advertising mainstream this year

The July PPV will undergo a name change from Vengeance to Fully Loaded (last year it was called Invasion). Vengeance was used in December of last year for the first time. The December show will go back to Armageddon, a name the WWF dropped after 9/11

May 13, 2002

Despite early reports indicating otherwise, Wrestlemania X-8 fell short of being the biggest money show in wrestling history and will have to settle for the No. 2 position. Based on very reliable cable reports, when the WWF announces its quarterly earnings later this month, Wrestlemania will be revealed to have done a 1.6 buy rate and about 800,000 buys. Those figures are a decline from the Rock vs. Steve Austin match the previous year which did 950,000 buys and a 2.0 buy rate. In actual buys, the Hogan vs. Rock match, the most heavily promoted match in company history, looks to be battling for third place with the 1999 Mania headliner with Austin vs. Rock. The 2000 headliner, a fatal-four way, drew 824,000 buys. The total revenue from live gate, PPV and merchandise for the 3/17 show from the Toronto Sky Dome, which did set the company's all-time live gate record, will work out to be roughly \$36,471,500. The April 1, 2001 show from the Astrodome in Houston finished with \$42,590,000 in total revenue. Wrestlemania 16 would be in third place with \$32,950,000. The figure is a major disappointment to the company because of pre-show internal predictions that the show would top one million buys for the first time ever. Even as late as a few weeks ago, when no estimates were released internally, the one million figure was still something of a target. The buy rate, which is the percentage of the available homes getting the show, at 1.6, was the lowest for Mania since the dark days of 1997.

July 1, 2002

Due to disappointing sales for the webcast of the past two PPV events, expect a drop in price from the \$24.95 that has been charged. They'll find out it's not the price, but when the buy rates come in, that they'll have the same disappointment

July 8, 2002

The quarter beat out revenue projections made at the end of last year by about \$10 million, much of which could be attributed to bigger than projected buy rates for both No Way Out (530,000 buys/approximately 1.06 buy rate) and Wrestlemania, the former attributable to the return of the NWO, or perhaps just Hulk Hogan. Hogan vs. Rock was also the key factor in the latter, and Hogan's return was also a key factor in merchandising per caps being for the quarter right at all-time peak year levels. WWE claimed that they are projecting now that Wrestlemania will do in the same range as last year's 950,000 buys. No specific number was given. Original company estimates for the show were 800,000 buys. Several weeks ago, an updated number was given which was about 820,000. There were also added revenues because some events that had been free televised events in the U.K. have been moved to PPV, and there is a growth in international PPV even though the domestic market for PPV seems to have gotten weaker.

Very early estimates on the Backlash PPV which was the Hogan vs. HHH title match, look to be at around an 0.8 buy rate or 400,000 buys.

August 12, 2002

A clarification on the PPV problems toward the end for ECW. In Demand paid ECW its PPV money for the first several years it was on. During ECW's final year, the payments got later and later, and then after ECW lost TNN and word was out of its financial problems, In Demand held the money back waiting to see what would happen

September 2, 2002

The combined in-quarter buys for Judgment Day (Hogan vs. Undertaker), King of the Ring (HHH vs. Undertaker) and Vengeance (Undertaker vs. Rock vs. Angle) was 850,000 buys, a scant 283,000 per event. With later buys that would be expected to trickle in, the final numbers will probably be closer to 325,000 per show, which is an 0.65 buy rate on average for the three shows. The same three events last year did 1.6 million buys, including 726,400 alone for the Invasion PPV. It has been years since any WWE show, let alone an average of three in a row, came anywhere close to that level of buy rate. It also should be noted that perhaps the rise in price from \$29.95 to \$34.95 could have played a factor, as these were three of the first four shows with the new price. More likely, they booked main events that didn't interest the public, which did seem to be the case at the time. If Vengeance ended up anywhere near that ballpark figure, that's also a huge disappointment for Rock's return, but that's when ratings were bottoming.

September 30, 2002

Speaking of that market, the de la Hoya vs. Vargas fight moved the Hogan-Rock match out of the No. 2 spot on PPV this year. De la Hoya vs. Vargas drew an estimated 915,000 buys (1.80 buy rate) and \$45.6 million PPV gross, second only to the Tyson-Lewis match which is now estimated as having done 2,015,000 buys (4.1 buy rate, the largest for any event in years) and

\$103 million (which I believe is the all-time record). Last week's fight was the second largest purchased non-heavyweight fight in history, behind only the 1999 de la Hoya vs. Trinidad match. The latest estimates on Hogan vs. Rock at Wrestlemania were 850,000 buys and a shade under \$34 million in PPV revenue.

December 2, 2002

Due to SummerSlam, PPV is up over the previous quarter to 1,025,000 estimated buys (about 450,000 for SummerSlam with Rock vs. Lesnar and about 283,000 each for Unforgiven (Lesnar vs. Undertaker) and No Mercy (Lesnar vs. Undertaker). The buy rates would be about 0.87 for SummerSlam, and 0.54 for the latter two shows, the lowest WWE PPV buy rates since February 1998. Realistically, things aren't dropping since Judgment Day, King of the Ring and Vengeance also all did about 283,000 buys per show.

October 21, 2002

The "Global Warning" show from 8/10 in Melbourne will be airing as a Fanatix Series PPV event starting on 11/5

January 13, 2003

Royal Rumble will be going partially head-to-head with the AFC championship game. Wrestling fans are a different breed, particularly today, than football fans (it would have been more of a problem in the 80s when there was more of a sports crossover audience and wrestling went out of its way to avoid those kind of conflicts). Still, it will hurt a little. WCW several years had bad luck of Halloween Havoc going against the World Series and it never hurt the buy rate as much as people feared

March 3, 2003

PPV revenues for the quarter were \$21.1 million, up from \$19.0 million last quarter (expected due to two majors in the three month period), which was down from \$23.8 million for the same period last year. Two things should be noted about a decline from last year. The first is that with the price of the shows increasing from \$29.95 to \$34.95 and the DirecTV settlement meaning about 20% more homes have availability than at this time a year ago, I expected those numbers to be up. A breakdown should be available after press time, but last year's final figures were 455,300 for Survivor Series, 307,200 for Vengeance (changed from Armageddon for one year because the 9/11 tragedy) and 636,100 for Rumble. In total, this year's buys are down about 17% from last year.

As reported here several weeks ago, the plans, effective at King of the Ring, is to promote eight brand specific PPV shows per year and four dual brand PPV shows. It is expected this announcement will be made officially at the company's stockholders quarterly investment conference which comes after this issue's deadline. King of the Ring, which takes place on 6/15

in Houston, will be an All-Raw show. Vengeance, which takes place on 7/27, will be the first All-Smackdown show. SummerSlam on 8/24 will be a joint show, while Unforgiven (9/21 in Philadelphia) will be a Raw show, No Mercy on 10/19 will be a Smackdown show, Survivor Series will be a joint show, and Armageddon on 12/14 will be a Raw show. Royal Rumble and Wrestlemania next year will also be dual brand shows. In addition, the company is going to hire separate production crews for the two shows. All things staying equal, which they won't, it means that the top level performers will be out four PPV checks per year. It would mean a redistribution as more different wrestlers would have the opportunity for PPV payoffs, so the Lance Storm level guys who appear on some but not all PPV's, would probably appear on more and benefit, but that's only if buy rates stay the same or only decrease slightly. All wrestlers share in PPV payoffs to a degree, but those who appear on the shows earn far more than those who don't appear, and the higher one is on the card, the larger their check, although the amount of money the show grosses is also factored heavily into that equation. Probably the most significant difference, besides simply not losing the kind of money, between the decline of WWE and the decline of WCW, is that while WWE has had similar ratings and house show declines, it has not had a similar PPV buy rate decline. It has shown a decline from its peak, but WCW fell in 2000-2001 to as low as 50,000 buys on some shows, whereas WWE has yet to fall below the 250,000 mark. The probable reason for that is that by and large, the WWE has produced far better PPV events than WCW did on its way down, most importantly (No Way Out being the exception) in the main event slots. This change in philosophy will put that difference at risk as far as talent depth. Smackdown has the main event stars to carry the PPV action, but the crew that will be around this summer is unproven as far as drawing PPV buys on its own, although the prospective addition of Austin (which hasn't happened yet and may have been predicated on Bill Goldberg winding up on Raw) would help that a lot. On the Raw side, if there is no Austin, HHH with the prospective help from Kevin Nash will wind up as the main stars. Neither is going to be a PPV draw together nor provide a top of the card match quality that will be much different than what did in WCW, figuring HHH headlines most shows. If Goldberg does sign, that should help things for one or two shows, if he's on the same side as Austin or if he opposes Rock. But the Scott Steiner experiment may be a lesson to learn. Goldberg should mean more at first than Steiner, which means an initial ratings jump. Goldberg vs. Austin or Rock will draw at first. I'm not so sure about HHH, and as the Steiner series showed, after one match, unless they book it smart (a relatively short match) and are lucky with crowd response, Goldberg may turn human within minutes, which isn't in anyone's best interest.

Bischoff was able to convince McMahon to partner with him and Joe Francis (who came up with the concept for the videos that are pushed on late night television) on the "Girls Gone Wild" PPV on 3/13. Probably not the hardest negotiations either have been involved with. Most of the show is taped except they will add a beauty contest (that is the segment that Keibler, Wilson and Test will be on) that airs live. The two are looking for a success on PPV to springboard to a feature length movie

March 17, 2003

With all the injuries, there are no plans at this point to delay the start of the Raw/Smackdown PPV split past the scheduled June kickoff of an all-Raw show at King of the Ring. I'm very worried about this decision, and was even before Angle and Edge went down. The biggest problem is that because PPV buys are so hard to accurately track, they may damage that aspect of the business as being "must-see" for a while before the data shows it. If this doesn't work, of course they'll go back to the original deal and I think they're looking at the fact ratings have now stabilized for each show as being proof that the wrestlers on each side can stand alone and carry a big show

March 24, 2003

For Germany, WWE PPV numbers were 11,089 buys for Armageddon (debut show so it would be higher than expected), 13,383 for Rumble and 11,734 for No Way Out. PPVs cost the equivalent of \$15 U.S. Buy rates respectively were 0.44, 0.54 and 0.47

Most of the reports on the Girls Gone Wild PPV were very negative. For the third WWE bait-and-switch in one week of a heavily promoted deal, none of the women got naked, and the deal was that Torrie was about to when she was jumped by Nidia, so that's how they got out of it

March 31, 2003

The 6/15 PPV in Houston has officially been renamed "Badd Blood," from "King of the Ring," so after a ten-year history of doing that tournament every summer on PPV, it is being dropped. KOR, once considered one of the major events of the year, drew poorly last year, but that was more due to the main event, since it had been years since the tournament was pushed as that big of a deal. Part of the reason for dropping the tournament is that this will become the first All-Raw show. WWF had used "Badd Blood" as a show name, but had retired it in 1997 when the show took place on the same day as the death of Brian Pillman

April 14, 2003

Girls Gone Wild PPV looks to have been a disaster on a number of levels. There were pre-show predictions by those involved expecting 300,000 buys because of all the plugs on WWE TV and the tease of seeing Wilson and Nidia nude. The hopes have now been downsized to 70,000 and indications are it won't come close to that. There are no plans for a second show and there is finger pointing among all involved because it's readily admitted the show was terrible.

April 21, 2003

There is talk of adding a PPV on December 31, 2003. While Howard Stern did huge numbers for a New Years Eve show many years ago, and Inoki now has a three-year tradition of running a New Years Eve show in Japan that has done huge business each time, I don't think this product is hot enough to where this would be anything but a disaster

June 30, 2003

The latest close-to-final Wrestlemania number was actually about 550,000 buys and not 585,000 as listed last week

July 7, 2003

The latest numbers from Backlash (Rock vs. Goldberg) are up to 350,000 buys. It's still a disappointment based on what they hoped the match would deliver, but there were estimates under 300,000 at one point. Judgment Day is coming in at around 300,000 and early estimates on Bad Blood are in the 250,000 to 300,000 range. They are happy with that number because it doesn't indicate a serious drop off for the Raw only PPV, but I think a lot of that is due to Foley's return.

July 14, 2003

World Wrestling Entertainment's decision to publicly release updated PPV buy information has led to a few interesting findings. While most figures are in the ballpark of what had been reported, and keep in mind all shows within the past year will have numbers constantly change, there were two shows of note over the past two plus years, one big and one small. It should be noted that all buys are approximate because of both the nature of PPV accounting, and also because the WWE released the information in a graph. The big one was the July 22, 2001, Invasion PPV from Cleveland, headlined by a supposed WWF team of Kurt Angle & Steve Austin & Chris Jericho & Undertaker & Kane against a supposed combined WCW and ECW team of Diamond Dallas Page & Rhyno & Dudley's & Booker T which did about 760,000 buys (the last number we had received on the show was 726,400), making it the fifth most buys for a pro wrestling PPV in history, trailing only the Wrestlemania shows from 1999-2002. Considering most felt that angle had already been botched by that time, the potential of that event and of that feud and the money left on the table is mind-boggling. But that is ancient history and hardly a revelation. The other is the May 18, 2003, Judgment Day from Charlotte, which did only 230,000 buys (the last estimate we'd heard was 300,000) according to the latest figures, and keep in mind these numbers will constantly change as more reports come in. The show, headlined by Brock Lesnar vs. Big Show in a stretcher match, HHH vs. Kevin Nash and Mr. America vs. Roddy Piper (as mentioned last week, that was screwed up by Piper's contract negotiations and the match was never announced until three days before the show), did a scant 0.44 buy rate, making it the lowest WWE PPV event since the December 8, 1997 D-Generation X PPV from Springfield, IL, which did the same 0.44 buy rate with Shawn Michaels vs. Ken Shamrock as the main event (this was the PPV the month after the famed 1997 Survivor Series, which also shows the idea that business picked up immediately after that show to be a fallacy, although house show business had been on the upswing for two years and PPV started turning around due to Mike Tyson and Steve Austin, and later Vince McMahon, over the next few months).

In looking at the PPV shows since January of 2002, here is what we find:

- 2002 Royal Rumble: 490,000 buys,
- 2002 No Way Out: 530,000 buys,
- 2002 Wrestlemania: 840,000 buys,
- 2002 Backlash: 345,000 buys,
- 2002 Judgment Day: 370,000 buys,
- 2002 King of the Ring: 320,000 buys,
- 2002 Vengeance: 375,000 buys
- 2002 SummerSlam: 520,000 buys. This was largely regarded as a huge success, as it was the last sports build-up they've done for a match, and it was the last show that didn't have something "special" that popped the elusive 1.0 buy rate, for Lesnar's title win over Rock
- 2002 Unforgiven: 295,000 buys.
- 2002 No Mercy: 300,000 buys.
- 2002 Survivor Series: 350,000 buys.
- 2002 Armageddon: 340,000 buys
- 2003 Royal Rumble: 515,000 buys
- 2003 No Way Out: 450,000 buys.
- 2003 Wrestlemania: 560,000 buys
- 2-003 Backlash: 350,000 buys.
- 2003 Bad Blood: 300,000 buys.

August 18, 2003

Preliminary numbers from Vengeance on 7/27 list the show as doing 225,000 buys, or an 0.42 buy rate. It would be the lowest buy rate for a WWE show since the December 15, 1996 In Your House PPV headlined by Bret Hart vs. Sycho Sid.

August 25, 2003

More updated PPV figures from Vengeance now have it tracking at 260,000 buys, or an 0.49 buy rate. It's a soft number, but not a recent record low, as the first HHH vs. Nash PPV did 250,000 buys. The first Raw only PPV with the HHH vs. Nash Hell in a Cell with Foley as ref is now at 320,000 buys, which has to be considered a success.

September 1, 2003

Misleading was Linda McMahon's statements that the PPV numbers for the quarter were almost identical to the same period last year, and using it to label the brand extension on PPV as a success. In actuality, the 2002 Judgment Day show did 370,000 buys, as compared to 250,000 for this year's version. And that was a combination show using talent from both brands. The first Raw-only show, Bad Blood, did at this point an estimated 320,000 buys. That is almost identical with what the hugely disappointing King of the Ring show last year did, which is tracking at 325,000 buys. Without question, Bad Blood was a success. But much, if not the entire reason the numbers were so close was not the successful brand extension, but the return of Mick Foley, who was given no credit at the investors conference even though these numbers were

cited several times and most everyone from the outside credited him with the success of the show. Vengeance last year did 375,000 buys, and this year's all-Smackdown version is now projected at 275,000, according to figures stated at the conference. So almost identical is actually 1,070,000 buys dropping to 845,000 buys, a drop of 21%. Some of that was expected and the buys are holding up better after the split shows that some expected, but to categorize them as being on the same level as last year is ridiculous. It is also highly doubtful this year's SummerSlam will come anywhere near last year's numbers. With Vengeance not being part of the quarter, the company, in the financials to get to the numbers claimed, was listing \$13.8 million in PPV revenue based on 900,000 buys for the Judgment Day and Badd Blood shows only. However, the company's own reported figures on those two shows were 570,000 buys, or a gross of \$8.7 million, which is more than the difference between profit and loss for the quarter. There is more PPV income, such as the Fanatix series (which maybe takes in \$100,000 per month), U.K. PPVs and adjustments upward or downward in previously projected buy rates, but I don't know where you're finding \$5.1 million in three months in those categories. Then again, some of that is offset by out of the expected \$4 million in revenue from Vengeance, a sizeable percentage of that will also be profit. While WWE compared its figures to the same period last year, which is how most businesses do it, with the nature of a rapidly changing environment, it's probably better to compare with the last quarter. But in this case, we can't because the last quarter was the Mania quarter, which skews everything. So we'll try and compare with the quarter prior to that (November through January). Keep in mind, that covers Christmas, so merchandising comparisons are probably better comparing a year ago, and PPV does include the Rumble, but when doing a two-show comparison we'll just ditch Rumble. House shows, because they run a light December schedule, should look better in this quarter. Based on that, in the last non-Mania quarter, the two PPV shows did 690,000 buys, so they are down 17% from what were not considered good levels six months ago.

September 22, 2003

The latest update on SummerSlam's buy rate is 0.74, which is 395,000 buys, up from the first estimate of 370,000. That still ranks it as the second lowest buy rate in the history of SummerSlam behind the 1996 show.

November 10, 2003

Preliminary numbers from WWE for the 10/19 No Mercy PPV from Baltimore headlined by the Vince vs. Stephanie match are estimating 250,000 buys, which would be a 0.47 buy rate. As things stand, that would be the lowest buy rate since late 1997, although these numbers can vary greatly as more reports come in. The previous low figure for the year was for the Raw show headlined by Bill Goldberg's title win over HHH, which is still being estimated at 260,000 buys.

November 24, 2003

PPV numbers, as has been noted, vary as time goes on because it can be a year or more, before the total number of buys is recorded. Sometimes the estimates go down, but usually they

go up. As an example, for the four shows this quarter, the company is listing 1.5 million buys. If you add the number of buys for the last four PPV shows, you get 1.26 million. The other 240,000 are adjustments to shows in prior months, much of it more than one year ago. The three shows that had major upgrades were the 2002 Royal Rumble as well as other shows in the early part of that year, as well as the May and June PPVs from this past year, in particular the June show with the HHH vs. Nash Hell in a Cell match with Foley as ref that turned out to be, by far, the best singular brand PPV since the split, with 385,000 buys. All of this is due to the much talked about and unique nature of In Demand's business, but they are figured into this quarter's books. It very well could be that there would be similar adjustments next year for this year. But as of current information, the buys for SummerSlam (415,000), Unforgiven (280,000) and No Mercy (245,000) are well down from 525,000, 290,000 and 300,000 respectively from last year. History tells us that at least some of the newer numbers are going to increase. Using current figures, the decrease looks to be 15.7%, but again, last year's SummerSlam was a fluke number. While SummerSlam won't beat last year's show, because Rock vs. Lesnar was that unusually well promoted match and storyline that hasn't been done since, singular brand Unforgiven will likely beat the dual brand show last year. Overall, the fear that the public would skip the singular brand PPVs at \$34.95 and wait for the four big ones hasn't proven to be the case. McMahon hinted at adding PPVs, which had always been the plan with the brand extension, but didn't get detailed on it at all. Based on the market holding up, an increase as an experiment from 12 to 15 shows is probably worth doing.

There are a number of misleading factors as it relates to the profit margin for the quarter being so high. The lawsuit settlement is the main one, and the second is that because the books cover from 7/26 to 10/24, there were four PPVs instead of three, and PPV is the most profitable arm of the company, meaning an estimated \$3.3 million in that regard (the profit on the 322,000 buys of the Vengeance PPV, which came after the deadline for the last quarter but would normally be figured into it)

December 1, 2003

Wrestlemania is scheduled to last a little more than four hours at this point, with a 7 p.m. start. In recent years, they've reserved a four-hour window and ended just before that time. This year, they've reserved a five-hour window, but last I heard, the show wasn't scheduled to go that long, but once you top four hours in planning, you have to reserve five. There will probably be a lot of old Mania clips being that it's the anniversary show

December 8, 2003

The decision on Wrestlemania is for a \$49.95 price tag, which would be up from \$39.95 the past few years. Because of that, they are going to almost have to promote it as bigger than ever, which means more matches and probably closer to five hours booked

December 15, 2003

The Survivor Series on 11/16 is now up to 390,000 buys. Shows what happens when you've got good TV hype directed at a show. There have been no adjustments to the other shows this year in a long time so it appears the Vince vs. Stephanie match is really going to end up around 245,000 buys, so that was by far the lowest in years. Shows what happens when you get nauseating TV directed at a show

December 22, 2003

As far as the PPV situation in the U.K. is concerned, Sky Sports has a contract to show eight of the 12 shows for free. The four shows not under contract, which are the January (Royal Rumble), April (Backlash), July (Vengeance) and December (Armageddon) shows were picked up by Sky Box Office as PPV events. At this point, both sides are negotiating a new deal. Knowing company history on this sort of thing, the deal will probably be worked out in time for the Rumble, although not necessarily. WWE has had disputes in the U.S., most notably with DirecTV a few years ago, and they usually got settled right before the big money shows. Sky wrote an apology to customers regarding this saying they hoped to have everything cleared up for the Rumble